



The Paper that can't be bought! **FREE!**

The Coastal Passage

24th EDITION
2007

The Voice of boaties everywhere!

And Spinnaker season begins!

INSIDE

Vicki J writes..
A Swedish Quicky

"Quoll II" does it
Good and Hard

"Tropical Cat"
Likes a big male?

"Dreamweaver"
Beats working!

The Bass Strait Boys
and still friends!

And even more
fun stuff, but
then there's....

Australian Customs
The Wreckers

Entering Australia
Do you feel lucky?



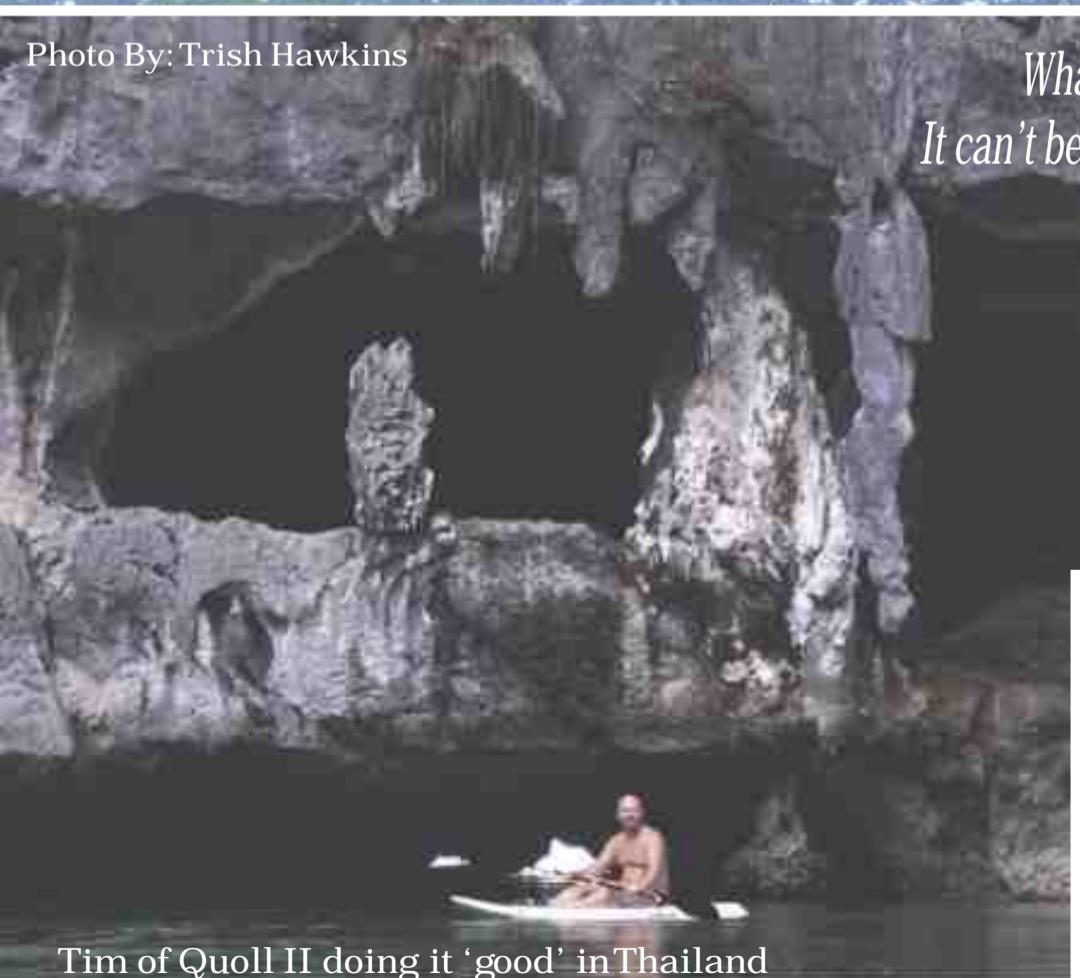
The Townsville to Port Hinchinbrook Blue Water Classic to pay out \$10,000!

Photo By: Trish Hawkins

What's your story???
It can't be about you without you!

It is almost Easter and boats all over the Queensland coast are preparing for the run north. From Brisbane to Gladstone and T'ville to Port Hinchinbrook and more. TCP is proud to announce part sponsorship of the

Blue Water Classic!
Multi's, Monos and Cruisers and rich in prise \$\$\$ YEAH!



Tim of Quoll II doing it 'good' in Thailand

Need some tips on timber boat building?
Ask the pros in Caloundra!



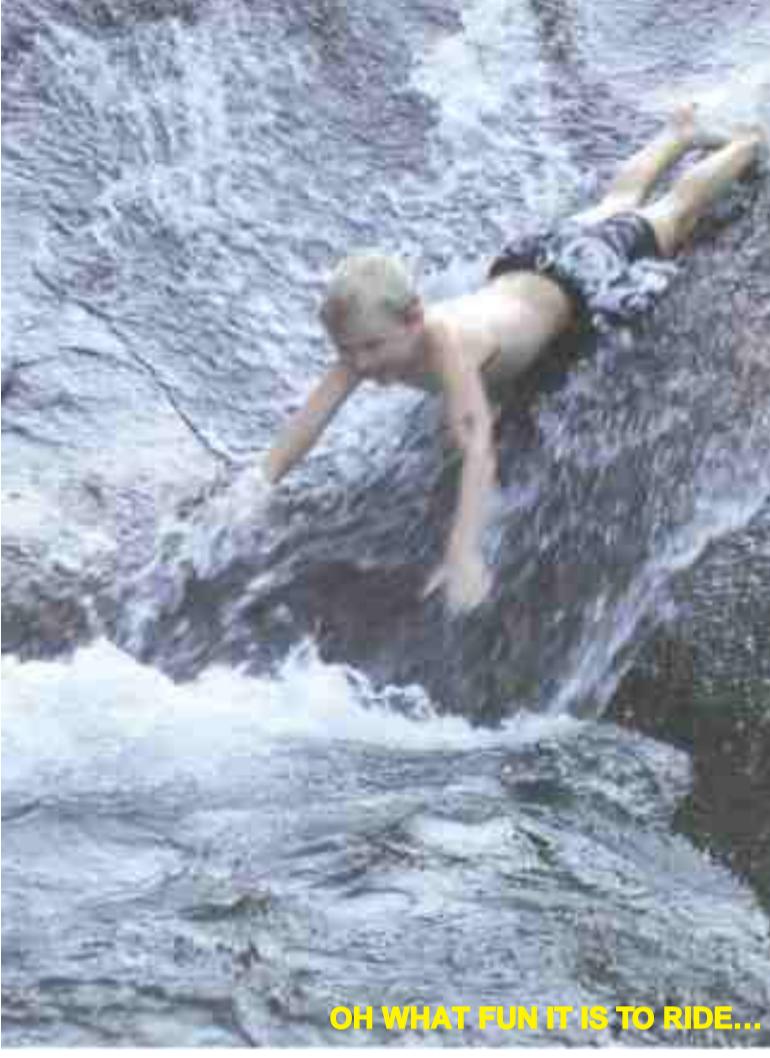
Photo By: Mike Dodgson the radio guy

If you like TCP but haven't seen the website yet you are in for a treat.
Just like the paper except more to love. See "New Stuff" on the home page for the most recent additions as material is added weekly more or less kinda sorta.....

www.thecoastalpassage.com



BLUER PASTURES...doing it good



OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE...

**Story & Photos by
Trish Hawkins, SY, "Quoll II"**

Our home from home this year has been the Andaman Sea, flitting between Langkawi , an island of NW Malaysia and Phuket, SW Thailand. Both islands are about the size of Singapore and there are hundreds of smaller islands between the two. Lying between Latitudes 6 and 8, the climate has been divine both in the wet and the dry seasons for us sun lovers.

Telaga Harbour has been our chief refuge in Langkawi. Our favourite spot here is a fantastic waterfall nearby, known as The 7 Wells. Here Tim and I and the boys have had loads of fun playing on nature's own waterslide and ending up in a whirlpool at the bottom, clambering over rocks to get out and up again. Macaque monkeys are in abundance in Lang, and are usually enjoying the morning sun having a bite to eat on the power lines as you walk to the w'fall.. One day I saw them playing in one of the pools, swinging from overhanging trees and pushing each other in. Just like us, really. Not so common is the spectacled monkey. There is one tree along the way where we often see them. The big white rings around the eyes give them their name. They're very timid and disappear if you hang around too long. Lang. also has prolific bird life. Sea Eagles, Brahminy kites, hornbills abound and not so common is a beautiful golden orange kingfisher. Phuket birdlife is almost non existent around the coast except for the Bare Breasted Booby Bird, prolific on the beaches of the SE corner!

There are more freshwater playgrounds that have kept us amused, a science centre for the boys, a cable car, many wonderful eateries and of course the beaches of the anchorage.

Sailing. That is a hobby we used to have. I seem to recall averaging 10 knots in the SE trades, cruising up the Q coast. These days it's motoring at 5 knots. The sail is there for decoration and to give you something to panic about when you see a thunderstorm blowing across the hills into Phang Nga Bay at a rapid rate of knots! The wet season has produced a bit more breeze and we had a few good sailing days. When the distance between anchorages isn't far and you have to run the motor to charge the batteries to run the fridge and the computer, motoring isn't so bad. The other joy is fish traps and nets. Sailing at 10 knots, keeping a good watch and avoiding the 'invisible' flags around the fishing nets is a trap best avoided.

Phang Nga Bay and its islands, hongs, caves and rock ledge overhangs continue to enthrall us. Taking a torch and clambering through a musty bat cave and reaching a hong or cavern at the end is a thrill. My favourite is the hong at Rai Lai Beach at Krabi on the mainland side of Phang Nga Bay. It's a challenging climb up the hill and down the inside. In a local magazine the vegetation was compared to something out of Jurassic Park. There are woven webs and ropes to help you climb down some of the steeper sections. Needless to say that the boys are down the bottom of each climb before I've gingerly moved my feet from the first foothold and asked for directions to the next.

We've made a very good friend in Phuket. On the road between Kata and Nai Harn is Charlie's Bar. Charlie is a gibbon who was rescued from 'slavery' as a wee fella. Now he roams freely on a property and comes into the bar for happy hour. He's not allowed drinks I don't know whether that's in the interests of his health or the drinks of the patrons. The attraction here is that Charlie does what he wants to do. Sometimes he gives you a cuddle like a long lost friend or he sits on the bar in front of you while you preen him. It may be your turn to be his best friend or someone else's. The boys have had the occasional bite when they've pushed the friendship too far.



THREE WISE MONKEYS!

It's a very low key bar. Drinks are cheap, unlike any of the other bars for miles around. There is no entrance fee or performance, and you make a donation for a bunch of bananas to feed the elephants. The boys have been out on the elephants a few times but walking behind them on a short jungle trek is also good fun. One day, Matthew almost didn't stop when

the elephant stopped to do a dropping. I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck. He looked up and watched it all come out, one step in front of him. Great entertainment!

There's always a new adventure and a new playground waiting for us somewhere. Right now the season has swung and it's time to move round the other side to the beaches once more.



QUOLL AND BACKCHATRUTH n JOCK MAIN, ENJOYING SMUGGLER'S COVE, PHI PHI LEI.

The author getting a ride...
It's better than walking behind!



DOING IT HARD!

Slipping our catamaran, Quoll II, at Fremantle was simple. Someone on the grapevine had a jinker we could borrow. We hitched it behind my little Subaru and out she came. We stayed on board, the kids went home to grandparents. Everything was easy. We've slipped the boat three times since, twice at Gladstone, and just recently at Phuket. Avoiding the cost of a lift out was a crucial factor in finding a haul out facility. The creature comforts available in the yard and nearby, came a close second. Any degree of comfort is desirable when living aboard on the hardstand. Limited shower and toilet facilities exist at most yards but it is nice to escape the puddles of antifoul, dust and grime and really get cleaned up. The extensive parklands and BBQ's at Gladstone allows one to totally escape the boat yard and enjoy the evening meal (A few thousand mosquitoes and sandflies also enjoyed their evening meal) Hauling out at Boat Lagoon, Phuket just doesn't cater for the plebs amongst us who live aboard and do our own work.

Here in Phuket, we have three boat yards to choose from. Again with creature comforts being a key factor to consider after price, we chose Boat Lagoon. It has a swimming pool, ideal for occupying the two boys and stopping them from 'floating boats' or riding their scooters through puddles

Everything is a toy in a boat yard



of antifouling and other choice debris freshly scraped off the hulls of world travelled hulls. Boat Lagoon is a Luxury Resort as well as a boat yard. Hence the reason

the boat yard is alongside manicured gardens a large lagoon swimming pool and high rise holiday units.

Having lived aboard whenever we've done maintenance or antifouling to Quoll, I'm well aware that hardstand ablution facilities are not quite 5 star. I'm also used to having to pick up the sander or sandpaper and doing it myself. So what's the problem? One problem is jealousy! Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods. I think that's the rule I'm breaking. 'Everyone else' is employing workmen (known as little brown people in not so politically correct circles) to refit the boat, antifoul and maybe add a little more stainless. To add insult to injury, they've walked away from their boat, flown abroad on holiday, or rented a unit for the duration! Even worse, those living in units on the premises could be seen strolling to the pool (keeping an eye on my children, I hope) taking long leisurely lunches or hiring cars to go wandering around the island. Meanwhile, we're doing it hot and hard. Oh to be part of the idle rich!

But the problem doesn't stop there. I just happened to acquire a dose of "Thai Tummy", a close cousin of Bali Belly. There is never a convenient time to get a dose of the runs, but working on the hard and having to run a few hundred metres to the toilet makes it a particularly inconvenient problem. Even more of a problem is that I did not always get a toilet when I got there. The Thai workmen didn't acknowledge that the first toilet they came to was the female ablution facility. On several occasions a male was occupying my toilet when I needed it!

BYO

But my problems didn't stop there either. The yard toilets are squat toilets, known amongst more athletic circles as starting blocks. You have to squat on the sides of the toilet bowl to do your business. It's also necessary to make sure you're positioned correctly or there's a chance there'll be more mess outside than in! Speaking of messes, toilet paper is a luxury found only in the resort where the real toilets are. At the yard toilets, there is a tub of water and a plastic container to sluice yourself. Yuk! Standing in a squat position on a wet toilet bowl, trying to clean yourself with a bowl of water is a skill I have no desire to master. BYO takes on a whole new meaning. Forget the grog, bring your own toilet paper!



LOCATION, LOCATION!

Sometimes, in a fit of desperation, I ran the gauntlet and tried to make it across the yard, through the units, round the pool and downstairs to the pool toilets. At the best of times this requires speeds akin to the 4 minute mile. With a Thai tummy, I was ready to train for the Olympics!

Between starting blocks and resorts and fly away friends, the crew of Quoll have been undergoing hard times on the hardstand at Phuket.

**When I grow up, I want to be part of the idle rich.
I don't want to do it hard.**

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*conditions apply (All prices include GST)

Matthew gives his opinion of squat toilets.
It's enough to give you the...

Dreamweaver's dreams begin

Story & Photos by Julie Williams,
SY "Dreamweaver 1"

140 days, 2700nm, 563 traveling hours (4.8 knots average for the mathematicians), 1800l diesel - some of the many statistics wracked up after leaving Mackay in early July this year to sail to Darwin. Insignificant though against the 20 odd years dreaming of the adventure and the previous five years preparing the 15m Roberts Pilothouse Spray 'Dreamweaver I' for the journey.

We tracked north via the reef with faithful south easterlies aiding our passage. Two weeks in the Whitsunday's was followed by a week in the Hinchinbrook channel before making Cairns for a week layover. Cooktown was our last stop for provisions before spending a few days at beautiful Lizard Island. Lizard is the end of the road for the majority of boats who float in with the sou-easters, spend a week or more, then turn south again, hopefully with a northerly behind them.

With increasing trade winds, and almost daily strong wind warnings, we made good time heading north through Princess Charlotte Bay. Too good at times with an unexpected four day layover in the Lockhart River to reinforce some suspect areas of the mainsail. Without a canvass needle, 3/0 and 4/0 fishing hooks found a use other than catching coral trout. Straightened and filed, they did an admirable (although painstakingly slow) job of sewing patches to the main. I don't think we'll be applying for a patent.

Julie and the daily fish!



With the wind and tide with us, we jubilantly rounded Cape York and entered the Gulf of Carpentaria and anchored at Seisia for the night. Now two and a half months into the voyage, we left the main stream of yachts crossing the Gulf of Carpentaria to Gove and sailed south into the Gulf. We were to see just two more yachts during the next six weeks before making Gove. Both were local boats which were anchored at Weipa and Karumba; testimony to the remoteness of the Gulf Coast. The only sign of human life between settlements was the regular sighting of fishing boats (prawn, mackerel and shark boats) and the nearly daily flyover of the Customs planes. Despite the life shortening fright of being unexpectedly buzzed by a low flying plane, you do take comfort knowing that there is someone else out there should things go wrong.

I had always envisaged cruising the Gulf coastline, but now understand why nearly all sailors take the shortcut directly from Seisia to Gove. Predicting the tides here requires a crystal ball, which unfortunately we didn't take with. On a number of occasions we were forced to drop anchor on lee shores with 20 knot onshore sea breezes. All we could do was look forlornly at the protruding sand banks guarding the entrances to our intended placid river anchorages. With onshore winds there is nowhere to hide along the entire western coast of the Cape with the exception of the Mission/Andoom Rivers (Weipa), Archer River and Norman River (Karumba), unless of course you carry the crystal ball and can enter the many other river systems at high tide. Even in sou-east trade winds, the afternoon breeze turns westward and turns your dream day sail into a nightmare anchorage.

The paucity of anchorages doesn't improve across the southern Gulf, although welcome stops at the beautiful Wellesley Islands and the Sir Edward Pellew Group make it worth the effort. Turning north, we rediscovered the meaning of headwind and spent many hours chugging up and out of the Gulf to Gove curiously but fortunately the cheapest diesel anywhere we went at a wallet wise \$1.16/l.

The north coast of the Northern Territory has been savaged in the past two wet seasons by category 5 Cyclones Ingrid and Monica. Scarecrow like trees without limbs and foliage protrude from the smashed forests across the entire coastline. It was a slightly sobering reminder of the fact it was by then November and Darwin was still a few map sheets

away! An exploration camp on Marchinbar Island (northern Wessels) was devastated after being bulls-eyed by Cyclone Monica packing winds around 350mk/hr. It was difficult to picture what the structures would have looked like before the onslaught even concrete footings from a building had been ripped from the ground and cast across the landscape.

Some 150nm further west at Junction Bay where Monica crossed the coast at full force, we found twisted and mangled vegetation and shores loaded with beautiful Bailer and Trumpets shells. Even mud crabs couldn't escape as evidenced by numerous large carapaces and claws amongst the shells.

It was with both excitement and regret that we finally slipped into our new marina berth in Darwin. We're back to air conditioning, 'limitless' water, fresh groceries and yes Julie, jewelry and clothing shops on tap. But we miss the million dollar waterfront views that change every day when we're cruising. One way or another we do lead a rather indulgent lifestyle, or at least we think so.

Next winter will see us in the Kimberley's and getting Dreamweaver ship shape again before we leave in May 2007 will be at the top of the priority list. Beyond 2007, who knows, but returning to 'work' sounds like a very poor option!



Dreamweaver



Mangled by cyclone Monica



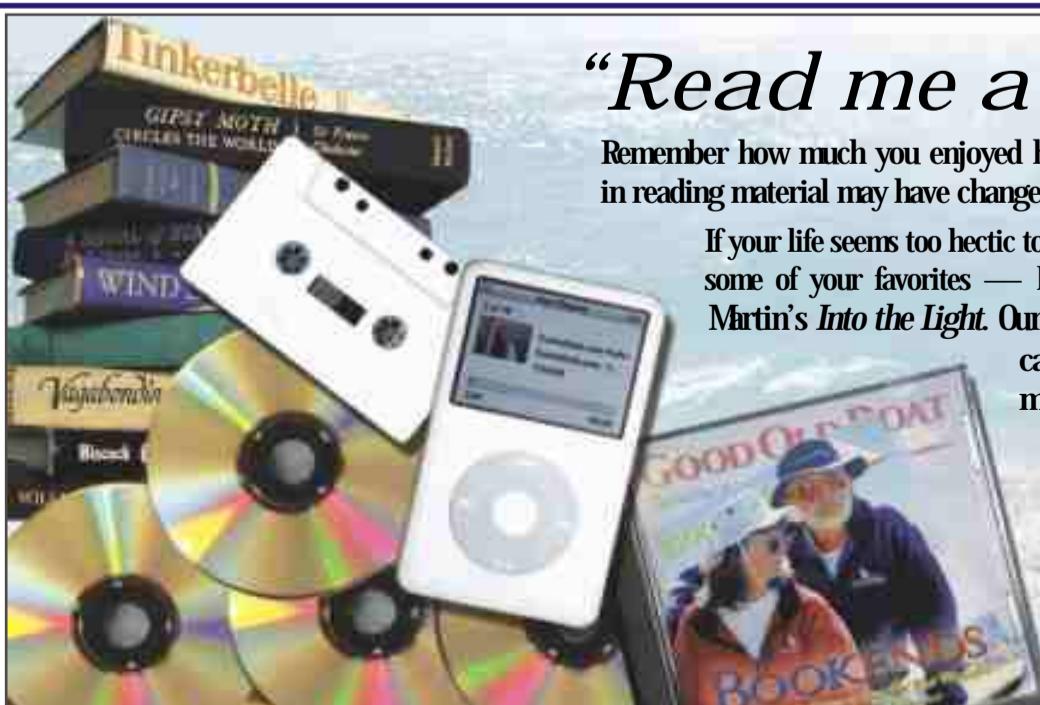
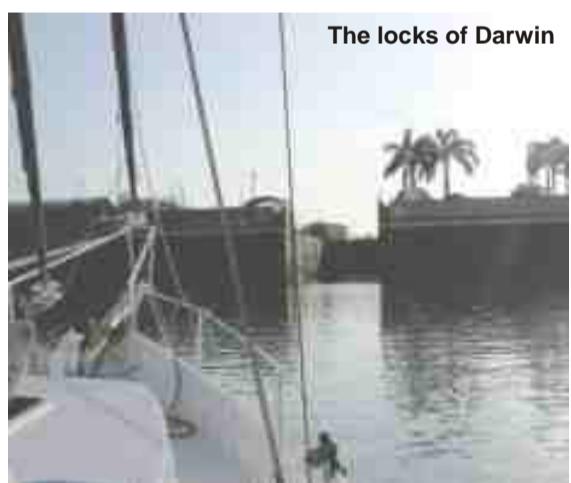
Another f#!#ing mudcrab!



The locks of Darwin



Julie and Cameron.. off duty!



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NEW LOCATION Royal Brighton Yacht Club



Commodore David Bingham and Rear Coomodore Gary Roswell in front of the fireplace in the newly renovated club house. TCP is placed next to the fireplace in this beautiful bar area.
Thanks Jennifer and the RBYC!

CONTRIBUTORS THIS EDITION:

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This issue, last issue, whatever..

This is the largest edition ever!... I hate large editions! It means I'm working harder and that isn't my goal in life but issues like the current customs crisis demands to be addressed and if TCP doesn't... who will?

editorial integrity policy... I wanted to make this as simple as possible and an analogy may be the best way. If you buy a property the realtor gets a commission. Fair enough. You ask the realtor who is the best conveyancers and you get a name of a crook you later find was giving the realtor a kickback for referrals... that's selling you out. TCP will never sell you out. If it's an ad, it will look like one and comment is never sold.

Marina complaints.. I have had a rash of letters from boaties complaining of poor treatment from various marinas. Generally the issues seem to boil down to boaties assuming they have particular rights and that usually isn't the case. Couple that with a few marina managers, arrogant in a period of strong berth demand and the words can get nasty. My advise? Vote with your feet and tell all that you meet! But don't wreck your day by starting a fight. There are more important issues around for us to tend to.

On that note, I've farmed out the editorial... Seriously! I made comment at a sundowner that I just didn't have time for this section and anyone there could have the helm if they wanted it. A dangerous thing to say what with the company I keep so here is a reply to my comments of last edition concerning the water crisis and how boaties can't possibly be blamed for this one. Cheers... Bob

Dear Norson,

My Storm Troopers have brought to my attention your disgusting little rag and your laughable assertion in your editorial (TCP #23) that we can't possibly blame you boaties for the water crisis. Be advised that the Government has empowered we humble public servants to do whatever we like (Boat Users Oppression Act and Regulations 2007) and if we want to blame boaties for the water crisis we will and there isn't a damn thing you can do about it and if you try we will prosecute you to the full extent of the law and our bottomless Government coffers and we've got more money than you, so there and it's all your fault anyway.

By way of correcting your wrong thinking, I bring to your attention the fact that all the good clean rain water that should be for decent land dwelling people to drink flows directly from the land into the sea so that you degenerates can float around in your horrible little boats. Even the most unwashed, rum sodden, brain damaged boatie, is there any other kind, should be able to understand the truth of this un-challengeable fact? And what do you do with all this precious water when you get it, you rock around till you make yourselves sick and then you vomit in it. That or you flush second hand fish curry into it which you've made from all those under size fish you steal from the Great People's Reef. What happens then? You pass this same water through your filthy, bacteria ridden water makers which you lazy bastards are usually too drunk to keep clean and then you drink it.

Therefore, I advise that in future you're disgusting habit of making drinking water from the sea that you constantly pollute with malice aforethought will be made illegal and you will be required to carry bottles of pure recycled sewage from the Parliament building of our glorious Government and you will bloody well like it or penalties will be applied. It should be noted that water passed by the Supreme Leader himself will cost extra, it's purity is beyond question and brings enormous health benefits to the drinker.

Furthermore, the massive contribution of boaties to global warming is also compounding the water crisis. As any right minded person will know your solar panels generate enormous heat, getting hotter and hotter as the day progresses increasing the ambient temperature of the earth and hence contributing considerably to global warming. In addition, what's worse is your nasty, noisy wind generators chop up all the cool breezes and mix them with the hot air from your solar panels which is then blown onto the decent land dwelling voters who have elected our wonderful Government costing them considerable amounts of money to run their air-conditioners. It is also patently obvious to anyone who has completed even the most basic Government Education and Thought Realignment Program that these selfish actions by boaties increase the effects of the drought. This will not be tolerated and legislation will be brought to bear to stamp out this antisocial activity.

Unfortunately, some less enlightened Governments have removed the statutes for capital punishment so we plan to reintroduce penalties that even you degenerate boaties will understand, flogging and keel hauling. That should drive you ashore where you can do no harm and you can live under the glow of our benevolent Government and the blessings brought by the Supreme Leader and pay your taxes like all the other peasants.

In conclusion, we know where you live, so you will cease immediately making these wild and unfounded statements in your nasty little rag. The Department of Right Thinking will shortly be in touch with you in regard to your re-eduction and thought realignment and I hope it hurts.

Your Humble and Obedient Servant, Heinrich Amin Obergruppenfuehrer
Department of Penalties and Oppression



The Voice of the Great Barrier Reef

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LETTERS

Dear Bob,

My partner, Mick and I are enroute to Australia from New York. We felt compelled to write and tell you our story, because **TCP** found us in Raiatea, near Tahiti in French Polynesia, so your rag is well travelled! We flew to N.Y. on the 19 April, 2006 to pick up our yacht and hoped to be home within 4 or 5 months but, as with some "new" second hand yachts, we had many and varied, rather interesting problems, including losing our rudder enroute to Marquesas from Galapagos, 360nm off shore. But that is another story.

An American bloke we met who flew in from Oz on his way to USA gave us TCP to read this week (5/3) as he was stunned when he read the bit about clearing in and quite frankly, we didn't believe him. Man, we were dumbfounded, for want of a better word, couldn't believe what we were reading!! We had no idea this rule existed and had it not been for Giles and TCP we would have come home to Oz the same way we did every other time, we would have broken the rules and been many dollars worse off. How rude is that? If they really must change the rules so be it but what about some common sense? Yachties don't pose a problem. We love Australia and have been singing its praises all the way from N.Y., honestly, we believe it to be the best country. We feel so sorry for those people who wrote in to TCP. Surely the powers that be can spot a genuine error when they see one? Have you had a look at the 'net to read up on the rules? Anyone who isn't computer savvy could very easily miss the bit about the time frame for entering Australia anyway. If he had to rely on the 'net Mick would lose out every time!

Now, on clearing in/out of USA. One would expect many dramas with this country after 9/11, but frankly it was a breeze. We think THEY should change their rules, maybe just a little. No one comes to your yacht, clearing in or out. We said what happens if we come back here? Do you check out the yacht? The answer was no, phone in and come to the nearest customs and immigration office, fill out the forms, answer the relevant questions, show us your passports, get your cruising visas and off you go. WOW!!!!!! The guy was more concerned with swapping doctor stories than with what was on our yacht. The point he made was, they know before we get there that we are coming (via satellite?). It's the old "big brother is watching you" thing. Foreign yachts are not the problem, they

look elsewhere.

It saddened our hearts to read that section of TCP. What is happening to Australia? We think the "powers that be" really need to look a bit further to solve the problem of terrorists and illegals at home. This law is going to cut the number of yachties visiting Oz and that, too, is disheartening. Giles is a yachtie, his yacht (*Petrel*) is here in Raiatea on the hard. After going home to USA he will return to sail to Australia and he is terrified of what may happen to him.

We, too, are a little apprehensive as our yacht, "*Grand Cru*", although Australian registered, is from USA. Of course, we have to pay the duty, but will they be difficult with us too? We'll keep you informed.

As a matter of interest, we are regular readers of TCP and it was great to have a "little bit of home" after being away almost a year.

Anyway, all the best, look forward to reading the next bit on the Entry to Australia saga. Do you think they will modify the rule?

Regards,
Brenda & Mick
SY, Grand Cru.

Dear Bob,

With a sense of disbelief I have just read the story of Magda and Bram in issue 23 of TCP. I would like to propose an idea to you that may go a long way toward gaining media attention on this important issue. By getting the press behind us we can draw this to public attention and hopefully move toward a more compassionate interpretation of customs law for cruisers caught up in the 96 hour nightmare. What I am proposing is that we have a fund rising to pay the fines of Magda and Bram. I would be willing to donate a sum of say 100 dollars to get the ball rolling. This would be a way of saying to Magda and Bram, that we as a community and as Australians welcome you to our country. Although customs has treated you unfairly, the cruising community still welcomes you and supports you. What do you think?

Jack Dunn SY, Zoa Brunk

Greetings Jack,

First of all, it is good to see that compassion and a sense of fairness is not extinct in this land. Your idea has been thought of here. However, there is an even more egregious

case than the Goedharts. The Manzari's of the American vessel, "SV Oceanus" did do everything according to the best and most recent information obtainable by them and still were charged. Their story is on the following pages.

Australian press, including the boating press is largely silent in any situation where citizens rights conflict with government convenience.

TCP will be happy to forward contributions to the Goedharts and the Manzari's details are on page 9.

Cheers
Bob

Bob,

I know I am probably wasting your time but these customs articles are starting to needle me, can I ask if you have sent a copy of these articles to any of the worthwhile media in this country (that's a small private joke) like the 7.30 reportie Kerry O'Brien?

Howard's new terrorist laws scare the crap out of me and their abuse by some of the people appointed to uphold them is beyond comprehension ie Phillip Ruddock.

Australians should be made aware of the fact that we live in a police state now. Please convey my apologies to those people bullied by our customs Nazis and please let them know that Australians aren't as bad as these clowns portray us. If I can help in any way please let me know.

Ashamed to be Australian
Bill Naylor

Greetings Bill,

This story is generating huge feed back... you are not alone. Your expression of support is a help. Because of people like you, TCP will stick to it. Media? See above.

Cheers
Bob

Hi Bob,

I was given a copy of TCP the other day and was drawn to the fact that you now have a website.

I want to congratulate the editor, contributors and all involved in producing such an interesting and entertaining surf. It has now been listed as one of my favourite bookmarks. I especially enjoyed the recent article on our "brutal" customs department. I could hardly believe they could create so much trouble for innocent people though I concede that referring to a cruising almanac 5 years old is fraught with traps for the unwary. I always have to remind myself that all government bureaucracies, no matter which country one visits, seize their little "moments of power". Australia is no different believe me.

Regards,
Mike, SY, Attitude.

G'day Bob,

I have read your article (Customs, TCP #23) and I am shocked. This is NOT the way to welcome people to our shores. Perhaps if we were a dictatorship or had third world leaders in charge it would be different. They at least realize yachts spend money.

I have taken the liberty to give your story to SAILNET for comment. (Listed under CRUISING on their forums) There are some replies there already. I hope you don't mind but the story got me pissed right off and I think it is a stupid law and should be gone. The bloody government must be run by the kids that can't get into child care centers. **Have a good week end and keep on going...**
Jim.

Sample letter to Australian Customs:

**From Petrea Heathwood,
SY, Talisman**

**RE: Notification of arrival of
yacht**

Dear Sir or Madam,

Persuant to your country's requirement that I give notice of arrival at least 96 hours in advance I write to advise the details of my planned voyage: After posting this letter tomorrow I intend to clear outward from Noumea towards Brisbane. Assuming I get clearance in one day and the weather outlook remains favourable I hope to depart the following morning. At my yacht's average speed of 4 knots the 1,000 mile voyage could take about 10 days. Should I encounter light weather my average speed could drop to as little as 2 knots. Depending on the duration of the calm I may motor for some or all of the time, raising the average back up to 4 knots while I am under power. If the weather becomes rough I may be obliged to heave to for the duration of the blow, thus making little or negative progress. Should the wind turn adverse I will be forced to tack to windward, cutting my average speed in half, or bear off for a different port of entry. Were this to happen, and I believe from study of the pilot charts it is likely, I may make for either Bundaberg or Gladstone. Failing that I may make landfall in Mackay. Therefore I am advising that the yacht..... is to be expected at a clearance port on the Australian coast within the next 12 to 30 days. God willing, and barring accidents, Acts of God or enemies of the State.

Yours faithfully etc...

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Who is responsible for this and how can you write to complain?!

A very good question as the recent scandals in federal government ministers are seeing shifts in portfolios at a rate of knots. Until March 6th Senator Chris Ellison of WA was the minister for "Justice and Customs" who besides being responsible for the controversy of entering yachts, was "infamous" for the "Integrated Cargo System" (ICS) debacle that blew out by 600% to over \$200 million and managed to strangle Australian ports and is seeing millions paid out in compensation to shippers. Senator Ellison has been the target of criticism by the Australian National Audit Office for numerous management faults and lack of accountability in that scheme. So where has he gone? The PM has now promoted him to replace Senator Cambell who recently resigned in the wake of the Brian Burke scandal, and to take charge of the "Access Card" scheme that is the largest IT project ever to be undertaken by the Australian Government, a \$1.1 billion program to link key health and welfare agencies and issue "smartcards" to more than 16 million people. Another noted achievement comes via the Australian Privacy Foundation that last year nominated Senator Ellison as the Worst Public Official in its annual Big Brother Awards for the "Abolition of Financial Privacy legislation, masquerading as the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Bill."

So, that explains a lot. One of the worst administrators in the country's history has presided over customs and has now been promoted to a position of even greater responsibility. His replacement? Senator David Johnston, another WA liberal that is already under attack for having ties to Brian Burke, who's association caused the resignation of Cambell. So, as of today, 24/03/07 the following information is correct but to be safe you may address your letter "To whom it may concern".

Minister for Justice and Customs - Effective 9 March 2007

Senator David Johnston

Canberra: Suite M1.48
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Perth:Ground Floor
183 Great Eastern Highway
Belmont WA 6104

Postal Address:
PO Box 531
Belmont WA
6984

Brutal Customs: A Real and Present Danger to the Yachting Community

I read with concern the articles "Brutal Customs" or "like old Communist Russia" published in TCP #23 2007. The threat posed to overseas yachtspeople as well as local cruising folk is serious and represents a profound abuse of human rights and freedom of travel. My short advice to overseas visitors is, Give Australia a miss. Go somewhere else and tell the government that's "where the bloody hell we are!" Take your foreign currency to administratively friendlier places.

Unlike the police, who, usually in my experience, respect the law they enforce and are trained professionals with an understanding of criminal law and of civil rights, Customs and AQIS personnel tend to be largely amateurs with ostensibly enormous power but little knowledge of the actual law they attempt to enforce. They are, in my experience having worked with the APS, basically public servants, transferred often from other Australian Public Service departments with little understanding of the complexities of international law, criminal law and maritime law and in these days of tight budgets given minimal training. Of course, those that handle the vessels are required to have the appropriate maritime certificates of competence but from what I have seen their competence in actual boat handling leaves a little to be desired.

However, make no mistake they have the power to board, seize property, detain and question people without the legal niceties required by the police. Treat them with caution and great suspicion.

The 96 hour rule requiring notice of entry is both impractical and unworkable. In any other environment, commonsense would see it as an absurdity. But the

Australian Customs and AQIS are strangers to commonsense. The Magistrates before whom "offenders" are forced to appear are also limited in their knowledge of the legal complexities posed by this branch of the law (they have to deal with everything from drunk-driving to DVA's and now international law?), and unless the defendant is represented by a legal expert in maritime law and administrative procedure, the chances of the facts being properly determined by the law are limited and the bellicose voice of the prosecution will prevail. No, justice is not done nor even considered.

In a perfect world, common law rules of natural justice clearly state that a person cannot be denied a right to know the case against them (*Kanda v Government of the Federation of Malaya [1962] AC 322*), that they have a right a fair hearing (*Russel; v Duke of Norfolk [1949] 1 All ER 109*), that any law that is so absurd that it cannot be reasonably complied with by a reasonable person is a breach of natural justice (*Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd v Wednesbury Corporation [1948] 1 KB 223*) and finally a person cannot be expected to comply with a law that cannot be reasonably and practically complied with (*Cooper v Wansworth Board of Works (1863) 14 CBNS 180*). But all these nicely reasoned decisions may be overturned by statute law. Then there are international rights, such as the Articles under the Declaration of Human Rights. But these have to be imported into domestic law where they readily acquire exemptions giving the state supreme power. We are not in a perfect world I regret to say. And not in a just world.

So what do you do? Avoid confrontation where possible. Keep out of Australia after all, that's the message of the 96 hour rule. If not, then collect your own evidence. Write

down everything said. If possible tape record all conversations (mobile phones can be used to do this) and photograph what you can. Although I can't advocate it and wouldn't dream for a moment of suggesting it, the use of a hidden miniature digital camera linked by Bluetooth to your laptop sending an email directly to a third party recipient, might do the trick. As to the admissibility in court of such evidence? Well, stranger things happen. Remember the authorities have all the power, the force and the implied threat of violence. You are alone with them on the boat with no witnesses and they know that. To have a chance of defending yourself, you simply must have a record, your own record of what happened. Pad and paper are the safest. They are also the most obvious. Often these interrogators feel threatened by you writing everything down. They may threaten severe penalties if you continue to write down what they say. Then they will say it is not necessary, you will be given a copy of everything... oh yeah. And what about an interpreter if English is a second language to you? These guys are not cops, they see no limit to their power. But never be deceived by the "laid-back" or "good-cop-bad-cop" posturing your interrogators may adopt. They are not paying a social call. Admit nothing and deny everything. Trust no-one. Trust anyone in uniform even less. Finally, contact the consulate or embassy of your country of origin. Ask them for legal assistance.

But safest of all is to stay away. There are plenty of friendlier cruising areas still around in this world. They need your cash more than Australia it seems.

Chris Ayres.
SY, Lady Lonsdale
Retired (and loving it) solicitor

My Opinion.....by a sailor who fears retribution if I give my name!

Readers of the last edition of The Coastal Passage (#23) would have been sickened by the reports of the blatant abuse of power by Australian Customs in regard to a totally unfair, unjust and un-Australian prosecution, some might say persecution, of some of our overseas cruising brethren for failing to meet new arrival regulations.

These unprincipled and vindictive actions by Customs make one ashamed to be an Australian, what ever happened to a fair go? Admittedly there may have been a small infraction in the letter of law but if one considers the reports that state that the law in question was new and unknown to most people including other Government Departments, Customs web pages were less than clear and had to be amended, other Australian Government agencies were unaware of Customs new requirements and gave erroneous advice and no consideration was given by Customs to the limited communications abilities of the average yacht let alone their reliance on fickle winds and an inability to provide exact ETAs, these surely raise some mitigating circumstances. Taking all this into account any fair minded person would have to think that a warning by Customs would have been more than sufficient penalty. But no, all the wealth and power of Government was brought to bear on those without the capacity to adequately defend themselves.

These actions bring into question the capacity of Customs to develop sound policy and legislation backed by community consultation and their ability to properly

disseminate critical information to those who need to know including other Government Departments. Also such a blatant, unbalanced misuse of power raises the question of whether or not Customs can be trusted to wield such power in a democracy. This last begs the question whether the decision to prosecute or not in Customs cases should be handed over to a far more responsible body, one that understands the meaning of natural justice, such as the Attorney-General's Department or the Federal Police prosecution section for example.

Customs actions in these matters also bring into question their capacity to think beyond the immediate. Any manager worth their salt would understand the critical importance of strategic alliances, which are about building relationships with those people or groups that can help you achieve your organisational goals and is sound business practice, something that Customs seems to have forgotten.

Now, most boaters would have had visits from Customs as they cruise along the coast, you know those nice polite people in their black rubber boats who give you pens, stickers and fridge magnets and ask you to help them out by reporting any suspicious activity. Well, guess what, in one fell swoop Customs appalling behaviour in these cases has managed to totally alienate the boating community, the very people whom they rely on to assist them to do their job and to be their eyes and

ears and in the process they have severely damaged one of their most important strategic alliances. The result of Customs venal behaviour is that the good will that has been built up by the troops on the ground has been totally undone by these callous prosecutions.

Now, no one is suggesting for a moment that if you were to see Osama bin Laden with an AK47 tearing past in a big Riviera you wouldn't report it but from now on the boating community will treat Customs with suspicion and much more warily as they have clearly demonstrated that boaters cannot have confidence in them to act fairly or justly and will be less likely to co-operate with or trust them in future.

Customs have clearly demonstrated by their actions that they are quite prepared to abuse the power given to them in the worst possible way. If their goal was to drive sailing tourists and the money they bring to Australia away from our shores then they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

The damage to Customs reputation will take a long time to recover from this unprincipled vindictiveness, if it ever does. We shall have to wait and see whether or not any new, more enlightened leadership in Australian Customs has the foresight to try to regain the trust and support of the Australian boating community that they previously enjoyed.

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Australlian Customs....

The Wreckers!

Modern Day Wrecking in Australia

By Jim and Dorothy Manzari SV Oceanus
Bundaberg, Australia

Since ancient times all seafarers have feared shipwreck. Even today with modern charts and GPS the worst nightmare of a modern-day ocean cruiser is the possibility to be shipwrecked on a strange and unfriendly coast. In times past professional wreckers moved navigation markers or lights so ships would be lead on to a reef or spit of rocks. The wreckers would then loot the ship. Whole villages at various times in history thrived on this gruesome trade. Now the wreckers and looters move the law to set traps for the unsuspecting seafarer.

This is a story of modern-day wrecking at its best. It is the story of how the Australian Customs Service and the Australian Consular Service bureaucracies recklessly mislead our boat on to the judicial reefs of Australia.

Our voyage began six years ago in Germany, when we purchased a small steel sailboat to use in our retirement. Our plan was to sail around the world. Dorothy is a citizen of Switzerland and Jim is an American. We had lived for nearly twenty years in Switzerland after returning from a previous stint of sailing in South America and the Caribbean. We have both been long-term sailors since before we met on a passage from Bermuda to the Chesapeake Bay back in the middle 1970s. We are both retired from many years working in the information technology field and were looking forward to fulfilling our dream of sailing around the world. Thirty years ago we purchased and sailed a small boat to South America from Great Britain. Those six years spent in some of the world's best cruising grounds convinced us that a voyage around the world would be a rewarding project for our retirement.

This story of ship wrecking begins with a visit to the Australian Consulate in Noumea the capital city of French New Caledonia. We had heard a few stories about how bureaucratically difficult Australia had become for visiting private yachts. Many cruising couples had warned us to stay away from Australia. An Austrian couple who have been cruising in the South Pacific region for fifteen years told us that they no longer visit Australia, because every time they had arrived they were treated like criminals by Customs and other officials. We heard a story of a sailor who was sailing directly from New Caledonia to Madagascar, more than 6000 nautical miles, without touching Australian waters to avoid the intimidation experienced by other visitors.

In spite of the heavy-handed behaviour by Customs we will go away from Australia with a very good impression of the people. Everyone we've met has been very friendly and supportive. Bundaberg is a wonderful town with its many shops, palm trees, and bird life. Sadly we've been essentially under boat arrest since arrival, so we have not been able to see other parts of the country.

In spite of what others had told us, we believed that if we were armed with proper information and instructions obtained from official Australian Government sources we could safely visit Australia to wait out the cyclone season before continuing our voyage to South Africa and beyond. How wrong we were!

On August 22 of last year we made the long hot walk across the city of Noumea to pay a visit to the Australian Consulate. We expected to receive up-to-date information from this source regarding visa and other regulations. We wanted to make sure we complied with Australia's requirements for a visiting private yacht. We found that the Consulate had only one copy of a undated document titled "Information for Yachts Travelling to Australia". This document was produced and published by the Australian Customs Service, the Quarantine Service, and Australian Immigration Department.

The Consular clerk was very reluctant to do the work necessary to make a copy of this 30-page document, but after some insistence on our part she agreed. This document was not dated. There was no way for us to determine if it was up-to-date. We rightfully assumed the Consulate would provide us with correct and timely information. This became a crucial issue in our subsequent legal battle with Australian Customs.

This document gave us four methods to report our impending arrival to Customs and Quarantine. We elected to use the first method listed. The first method given was to report at the port of intended arrival, Bundaberg, by calling a radio station call sign VMR 488 on VHF channel 81. The impending arrival report, according to this document, must be made at exactly 48 hours (this turned out to be wrong) prior to estimated time of arrival. This is similar in every aspect to the method we used the previous year when reporting impending arrival to Customs in New Zealand. The person or committee in the Australian Government who wrote this document must have known that VHF marine radio cannot be used beyond a point where line-of-sight communications can be established.

It should be noted according to International Law the Flag State dictates the type of radio (if any) that is required to be carried by ships under its flag. Our boat, Oceanus, is a US flag recreational vessel and is not required to carry any kind of radio whatsoever. With the exception of EPIRB, we have heard the same is true of recreational vessels flagged by Australia. The choice of radio type is completely optional for foreign-going recreational vessels in both countries. In more than twelve accumulated years of sailing throughout the world we have never found the need for more than a simple hand-held VHF radio.

We found after arriving in Bundaberg and being charged with violating the Custom Act that a new up-to-date "Information for Yachts Travelling to Australia" document has been published by Customs, Quarantine, and Immigration. This new document offers only three methods for reporting impending arrival. VHF radio is no longer an option. Had we seen the up-to-date document and its reporting instructions we would have reported prior to departure from Noumea, since we have none of the equipment needed to communicate by email, fax, or telephone from sea.

This new up-to-date document is dated October 2005. We're still mystified why this up-to-date document was not handed to us in Noumea. The new document had been published by Customs nearly a year before we visited the Consulate. Our dispute with Customs concerns the timing and method of reporting our impending arrival and the different instructions given in these two conflicting documents.

It needs to be emphasized that Customs hadn't gotten off their collective backsides two months after we became enmeshed in this dispute. In spite of the fact that the front-line Customs officer stated on the day of our arrival that the old document had been subsided and was no longer valid, in spite of a lengthy submission given to Customs by our solicitor pointing out the mistaken information in the out-of-date document and the new reporting methods in the new document, no one in Customs had bothered to inform the Consulate in Noumea that they were still handing out the wrong document until at least November of 2006, two months after charging us. Canadian friends of ours visited the Consulate in early November 2006 and were given the same defective and out-of-date document that caused us so much trouble.

We discovered on the day after we arrived in Australia Customs and Quarantine published an authoritative Hydrographic Service Notice to Mariners amending the List of Radio Signals instructing ships without fax to report at the port of intended arrival just as we have done. Obviously ships were having the same

difficulty reporting with the mandatory signature when they did not have a shore-side agent to do the work. This is the fundamental problem in the way that Customs attempts to bend the requirements of the Customs Act to apply to both commercial ships and private yachts.

The lack of distinction between ships with their shipping agents, ship service companies, and shore-based computer communication facilities, and pleasure craft without any of these capabilities is at the root of our difficulties with Customs. Add to this mix the abysmally poor information given to the public outside Australia, even by official sources such as the Consular Service, and one can easily understand why our situation arose. We are the experimental guinea pig to resolve this muddle in the implementation of the Customs law through the court system.

We have been prosecuted for reporting to no one prior to arrival in Bundaberg. This ignores the fact that we followed the Customs instructions to the letter and reported to VMR 488 on channel 81. We asked VMR to please report us to Customs and Immigration as is the standard practice throughout the world. VMR then asked us a series of questions which were obviously items of information that VMR intended to pass to Customs and Quarantine announcing our arrival.

The prosecution convinced the magistrate that we had made no report to any official government agency! The prosecution argued successfully that VMR 488 is only a volunteer organization and not an official arm of the Australian government. This is in spite of long-standing agreements between Volunteer Marine Rescue Inc. and the local Customs and Quarantine officials. This is in spite of the fact that the government has shutdown all official radio stations along this coast.

As a result we have been convicted of a serious crime attracting a 9 month prison sentence or fine of \$4,000 and prosecution costs of \$15,000. Our personal legal costs are now approaching \$40,000.

The Australian Customs Service made many mistakes in their rush to prosecute. We discovered, unfortunately too late to use in our defence at trial, that the offense we were charged with should not have been prosecuted at all!

In 2001 the Australian Parliament, under pressure from shipping companies and import brokers amended the Customs Act to downgrade impending arrival reporting infractions to the level of Infringement Notice. The relevant section of the Customs Act is titled "Penalty in lieu of prosecution". This would have given us 28 days to write directly to the CEO of Customs giving exonerating evidence of why we were misled into committing the infraction. In all likelihood the CEO would have agreed that we were misled by the out-of-date document and would have withdrawn the infringement notice. That would have been the end of the matter.

Had the CEO disagreed with our reasoning, we would have paid a penalty of about \$1300. And the right of Customs to prosecution would be extinguished. By law there would be no publicity or criminal stigma attached to the payment of this penalty.

As far as we can determine Queensland Customs is the only region in Australia that is prosecuting the weakest targets they can find. We have been told by many sailors that if we had arrived in Coffs Harbour this dispute would not have happened. The front-line Customs personnel would have used their discretion to understand the misleading instructions given in the out-of-date document. At most they might have issued an infringement notice.

It must be noted that we are not unfamiliar with procedures for entry into a foreign country by private pleasure craft. We have accumulated more than twelve years experience on two

different boats in almost all the oceans of the world. Jim served honourably for four years in the US Coast Guard and has several years of experience on a research vessel. We have in the past entered and cleared from more than 25 countries without any kind of problem.

Furthermore, we strongly believe all countries have a moral and legal right to protect their borders from illegal activities. Movement across the border into and out of a nation state has always been controlled, so far as possible. A core function of any state is to protect its own political authority and to protect the society under its authority. For most threats, that protection requires control of the border. Conceptually, this protection is integral to the notion of the political sovereign and political authority.

Powers that might not be justified as part of the normal citizen/state relationship within a society may well be justified at the border, because of this integral protective responsibility. This does not mean the power is without limits. All power is subject to the law and to general considerations such as human rights protection, reasonableness, the laws of natural justice and so forth.

Our dispute with Australian Customs arises where over-zealousness, inadequate or poor training, misunderstanding and misapplication of the Customs Act, mismanagement, incompetence, or malicious enforcement by front-line Customs officers in Queensland creates a situation where the probability is very high that innocent persons will be prosecuted for something that is not their fault.

Once the legal system begins rolling down hill it is virtually impossible to stop. It's like an avalanche destroying everything in its path. Reason and logic, common sense and basic fair play all get plowed under by the legal rush to judgment. Our solicitor believes there are a number of substantial grounds for appeal and we have therefore filed an appeal.

Many readers will wonder why we didn't just plea guilty like the two or three other prosecutions here in Queensland and continue on our way. There are two reasons. First, we do not like being marked as a criminal. We have managed to live to be 65 years of age without breaking the law. In our 65 years of life we've grown accustomed to our good reputation. Our good name actually means something to us.

Secondly, we discovered within a day or two of arrival in Australia, Customs operates an international watch list for terrorists, drug smugglers, and other so-called "persons of interest". We had fear that our names and the name of our boat would be placed on this watch list if we were convicted of a border violation. That would have serious long-term consequences with regard to continuing our voyage around the world. More than twenty-five countries have access to this database, including the USA.

In the interests of sound border security there are a large number of things wrong with prosecuting the wrong people, a prosecution that is founded on an issue of incorrect and misleading information handed out by government departments. Wasting time on the wrong people, persons who have been vetted and issued a visa as acceptable to enter Australia, is a failure, not a success, of the border security system. Wasting taxpayers money over what is essentially administrative infractions that should be dealt with by the Infringement Notice scheme is a failure of the border security system. We are still mystified as to what is the objective in prosecuting the weakest possible targets. Alienating the very people who could help Australia protect its borders is a very poor public policy.

Entering Australia... do you feel lucky??

Research and comment by Bob Norson

In last edition of *The Coastal Passage* I published the accounts of three sailing boats entering Australia and the difficulties they had with Australian customs. The first letter to arrive was from John Hayward concerning his friends Bram and Magda of the Dutch boat "Saluut". It was hard to believe. If it wasn't for the corroborating accounts I may have dismissed it as exaggeration. When I did investigate I found much similar detail between the accounts. The worst of it was discovering the plight of Jim and Dorothy Manzari who's story is on the previous page. These people had been warned of the difficulties with Australian Customs but had faith in the notion that if they were very careful to follow the procedures (however irrational they might be) to the letter they would have to be OK. And now they find themselves branded as criminals, a state of affairs they will not accept. How could something like this occur in my country? Where did all this come from? Why hadn't I heard of this? And many more questions.

What I have found is legislation that seems unclear and then the enforcement is handed to an agency that has suffered a serious decline in international reputation typified by their "Integrated Cargo System" debacle that recently caused Australian ports to seize. (and at a reported cost blow out of \$200 million!). Domestically there is the documented decline in professionalism and overreaching of jurisdiction. (see; "Dangerous customs", TCP web site under "issues") In short, Customs are interfering with domestic craft and a foreign flagged vessel entering Australia is taking a real crap shoot. Do you feel lucky?

Lets start at the beginning and ask **why the legislation in the first place?** Reacting to, or capitalising on fear, this is all under the heading of "Border Protection Policy" which sounds good except in spite of much research I have not found an example or suggestion of there ever having been a threat to Australia or anywhere else via yacht. But for the sake of argument let's say there may be suicide Beneteau bomber out there somewhere. If any one would have had to deal with such a threat I imagine that would be someplace like Israel. Except for their relatively large coast line, they are literally surrounded by hostile nations dedicated to their destruction. So what is their entry policy for yachts? Give a hoy on your VHF as soon as you are in range thanks. Most boats report that they are met at about 40 miles off by a patrol craft anyway. And what of the post 9/11 US customs entry policy? Upon arrival please report to the nearest customs office, that's it. The only country that has anything remotely similar to Australia's policy is New Zealand and they seem to have a relaxed enforcement attitude. I called myself and asked and I was told that as long as you give an estimate of arrival at least 48 hours in advance (no maximum period as in Australia) via fax from your last port and call with VHF when in range you are OK. In fact in all the searching I've done, no country on earth is as dangerous to enter by yacht as Australia. Hey! We're number one!

Why no notice of this new policy? No press releases? I was shocked that I had not heard of the policy prior to the first conviction reports. I have yet to talk to anyone who found out about this through what one would consider a "normal channel." Even the government friendly press were mute on this. I saw ads from customs extolling the virtue of dobbing in anything you see that is suspicious while out on the water but not one mention of this radical change to customs enforcement.

Why so harsh? Thousands of dollars and a criminal record for this minor infringement? This does not appear to be meant to educate and persuade as much dissuade people from the cruising lifestyle.

Dorothy and Jim Manzari of SV *Oceanus*, are not rich, just principled. The battle they are fighting is one that will have importance to any private vessel that will enter Australia in the future... maybe you!

Do you think that these brave people deserve help?

Would you like a way to express your anger at the injustice?

If you want to help the victims of our "border protection policy", make a statement and protect your boating future, your freedom, then please contribute what you can to help offset the legal costs they face and fines already paid and let them know you care. I believe their case is good. I believe that given the right legal venue they will succeed. I have put my money where my mouth is. To start this off *The Coastal Passage* has donated \$500. Whether you can afford \$5 or \$1000, all donations are welcome.

To donate by cheque, make payment to "Dorothy Manzari" and mail to:
Dorothy Manzari
C/O The Coastal Passage
P.O.Box 454
Bowen QLD
4805

For direct deposit:
account name: Dorothy Manzari
account number: 734122-765485

Westpac Bank
100 Bourbouq street
Bundaberg QLD
4670

"**Border Protection Policy**" as it applies to pleasure craft appears to be a sham. In spite of considerable time spent in search, I can find no evidence or even suggestion that yachts deserve the attention that they now "enjoy". If ever there is a serious threat to our shores it is most likely a yacht that will make the first report... providing the yacht is inclined.

Why does customs work so hard at image control? It's easy to get the impression that Australian Customs spends an inordinate amount of time and resource in message control, even to minutia degree. It is obvious (in my opinion) from a thorough web surf that Customs commits a large effort to its web presence and search engine placement. And be wary of trusting their web site for information as it seems to change often; perhaps in response to publicity? A whole page of information that I pointed out in last edition ("information for ships masters") that contradicted what customs had been stating in public and in court, has simply been removed from the site for "travellers" and other small but important details change from time to time. I also advise caution in taking the terms they use at face value, like "Border Protection policy", Remember the "Iron Curtain" or the "Berlin Wall"? Well to East Germans it was the "**Anti-Imperialist Protection Wall**". Have a familiar ring to it?

Customs officials at risk... Customs officers that cause harm in violation of law may be held *personally* responsible for those damages. Just because superiors order a thing to be done and assure it is law is not necessarily protection.

Pariah State? Us?? Australia?? How can this be?! But it is true already. Reports have been coming in for months, even before the latest outrage. Some Australian cruisers are leaving their boats in foreign ports and flying home for a visit or business. Many foreign flagged vessels are by-passing Australia in favour of countries like Indonesia where it is considered "safer" than here.

What of the boating industry? The last few years have been good but there may be storm clouds on the horizon. For those that remember the controversy in New Zealand a few years ago, it was industry pressure and a brave yank that took it to court to overturn a law there that saved the day. (New Zealand passed law that required safety equipment on departing yachts that was at odds with international law and common practise.)

How attracted are people going to be to cruising when Customs states they can "board any vessel, anywhere, anytime".

Might be bad for business.

Questions, questions, and few satisfactory answers... My mind keeps returning to a brilliant quote from the book "Atlas Shrugged" by Ayn Rand that one of the first victims of all this, American Yacht "Sochatoa", had in their report last issue...

"Did you really think that we want those laws to be observed?... We want them broken... We're after power and we mean it... There's no way to rule innocent men. The only power any government has is the power to crack down on criminals. Well, when there aren't enough criminals, one makes them. One declares so many things to be a crime that it becomes impossible for men to live without breaking laws. Who wants a nation of law-abiding citizens? What's there in that for anyone? But just pass the kind of laws that can neither be observed nor enforced nor objectively interpreted - and you create a nation of law-breakers - and then you cash in on guilt."

How do other countries handle entering yachts?

Entry standards as posted on cruising web sites. These examples have been edited for brevity and should be sufficient for comparison but for more complete information refer to the countries in question or www.noonsite.com

Russia: Get a visa in advance and contact by radio upon approach. Next port requires 3 day notice and 1 day (24 hour notice) is required for departure.

USA: You should notify customs immediately upon arrival at a clearance port. Formal clearance required within 24 hours at INS office after arrival. There is a 96 hour requirement for notification from ships over 300 tons but this does not apply to "non commercial pleasure vessels."

UK: "On arrival in a place where there is a customs house, the captain must notify customs in person or by telephone. Notification must be made within two hours of arrival, unless arriving between 2300 and 0600, when arrival need not be notified until 0800 the following morning..." EU residents need not make formal entry.

Portugal: Use port of entry and clear in upon arrival.

Canada: Use port of entry and clear in upon arrival.

Croatia; Use port of entry and wait till customs come to you. (marina or harbour staff usually take care of notification) If no one shows up for a period of time, report to nearest police with passports.

Cuba: As soon as Cuban territorial waters are entered 12 miles off the Cuban coast a yacht must contact the port authorities or coastguard (Guarda Frontera) on VHF Channel 16 or HF 2128KHz.

Israel: From 40 miles off the coast, a position report with the yacht details and ETA should be sent via VHF radio to the Israeli Navy.

Philippines: Yachts, especially those with animals on board, are expected to contact the quarantine medical officer 24 hours before arrival, but this is often waived as impractical provided the yacht proceeds to an official port of entry.

Mexico: On arrival in Mexico, yachts must go to the nearest port of entry, with the Q and courtesy flags flying.

Sri Lanka: On arrival in a Sri Lankan port, the captain should report to the harbour master, or report to the nearest customs officer or police station immediately.

India: Enter any major port, when approximately 10 miles offshore, you should call first Coast Guard on Channel 16 and then port control on Channels 16 or 12. Various details will be asked including an ETA. Once at the port entrance, permission to enter must be requested. Port control will advise where to moor.

Norway: Yachts from Nordic countries do not need to make a customs declaration provided they are not carrying an excess of dutiable stores and equipment and do not remain in Norwegian waters more than six months. Yachts from other countries should report immediately on arrival at a port of entry. Customs clearance is not strictly necessary if one has nothing to declare, but is recommended.



Bob Norson (right) with Dorothy & Jim Manzari

TCP's Forum

MARINE INSURANCE - AGREED VALUE OR MARKET VALUE?

Dear Bob,

I wonder if you could invite say a retired Insurance officer or underwriter to do an article on obtaining insurance for private boats. I seem to be having all sorts of problems getting a satisfactory cover?

I bought my Duncanson 35 "Opal" about 2 years ago in Cairns. As usual I had an out of the water survey done which cost me some \$550. As a result, I promptly insured with ABC marine insurance for an AGREED SUM of the purchase price. A year later, when I got my renewal notice, I also got several demands for things to be updated together with a statement that "...as my boat was now 20 years old, my cover was reverting to "Market Value" instead of "Agreed Value"...."

This really pissed me off as my boat is also my home, and I had maintained and improved it well beyond the original purchase price and considered it to be worth more than I had paid for it. But without even a cursory inspection (which they never seem to do-why?), they decide to alter the terms of my contract of insurance in favour of themselves and as they are almost a monopoly in private boat insurance, they can do whatever they please.

So I went hunting for another insurer (not easy because of the aforementioned monopoly). However I used a broker in Airlie Beach who got me insured with XYZ Marine Boat Insurance for an agreed sum of again the original purchase price. This continued for another 12 months until my renewal again declared that "...My policy has been changed to a market value policy this year...." "This can be amended to an Agreed Value Policy by providing a current valuation from a Yacht/Boat Broker or an accredited marine surveyor...."

On speaking to a yacht broker, he quoted me \$150 to do an insurance valuation on my boat! So, now although I had provided the insurer with a schedule of all the maintenance and improvements done to my boat since that original survey, and several recent digital photos of my vessel, I had to outlay another \$150 on top of my comprehensive insurance premium. This would bring my "Insurance Cost" to about \$1,000 per annum and I started to wonder whether it was worth it to cover it comprehensively at all?

Why not insure for 3rd party damage

only and self insure for the rest? My first quote thru a broker was \$324. My next quote from ABC direct was \$270 but I would need to get an out of water survey done as well! This would add some \$800 to my cost and I would still have no insurance to cover my boat!???

It infuriates me particularly as I am most fastidious with doing everything possible to maintain and improve the value of my vessel and the damn insurers keep trying to screw me down to "Market Value"-whatever that is? When I once asked them, I was told "Oh we get a few brokers to estimate a value and average their replies" That is fine for run down boats that have been allowed to deteriorate with little or no maintenance, but not for fastidious owners who try to do the right thing and keep upgrading them?

There should be some allowance made for the different standards of boats when it comes to insurance. But it is very hard to justify paying a marine surveyor \$500-\$1000 every two years just to maintain Agreed Value insurance. Plus \$150 to a yacht broker every other year!?

What would be so hard for an underwriter to visit all marinas say once a month and to photograph and inspect any vessels covered by their insurance company?

The owners could also send digital photos of all replacements and improvements during the year to justify their agreed value?

There must be a better way than providing a gratis payment to marine surveyors and brokers which is aggravating the high cost of insurance beyond the reach of most yachties?

What do you think?

Keith, SY Opal

Greetings Keith,

You make a good point and address a subject worth discussion. I came to doubt the cover we had on WhiteBird before we sold her and glad we did not have a claim to fight over. Let's put this up for public discussion and see what we get. BTW.. I did edit out the names involved in your letter to allow free response. One thing I know for sure, next to the government, the insurance companies have all the vicious lawyers!

Bob

OK, here's a few topics to ponder, comment or just complain about like the rest of us! Go ahead, it's always good therapy to rant and rave and sometimes it's quite productive!

YOUR BLOOD GROUP AND SHOE SIZE- THE ULTIMATE VMR SOLUTION.

By Keith Owen, SY Speranza

The other evening, after a splendid meal, I was polishing off the remains of a fine bottle of Eaglehawk 2004 Merlot. In a reflective mood, I started thinking about VMR's. By and large they do an outstanding job and are manned (personned?) by dedicated volunteers. This article should in no way be taken as criticism of the service they provide. However, it is legitimate to suggest improvements that might be made to their operations. So what better forum to float the following idea than in *The Coastal Passage*. The brave editor has taken on the Poo Police, Customs and silly Sir Humphries. I reasoned that if Bob was game enough to print this article, this would automatically prompt a reaction from the readership. Hope I'm not wrong.

We had an experience this year that got me thinking. We clocked on to a VMR giving the usual passage details. We were then asked question after question about boat details (colour of hull and deck, height of mast, etc) then mobile phone numbers, shore contacts (names and numbers). The whole conversation went forever. I felt like adding, "My blood group is O positive and I take size 8 1/2 shoes. Now you have the lot!" I resisted the temptation. Friends in another craft, who were following behind, decided not to log on so as to avoid being put through the same detailed interrogation.

Now, all who know me will be staggered to read that I am proposing technical innovation. I do admit to having had a technical bypass at birth. But I am catching on. I finally know what Broadband is. I hear it regularly on the HF when Mechanical Mike says, "There is a Broadband of high pressure along the Queensland Coast." So there! (Although, I admit that until recently, I thought KBTS was a brand of breakfast cereal.) Anyway, back to the VMR.

I know that there are various organizations within the VMR umbrella and the individual groups do not form a cohesive, close family in spite of having the same worthy objectives. But, that should not be an excuse to avoid linking them all to a single universal computer-driven network. The idea would be to have a complete description of boats entered once and once only on the net, which could then be accessed by all participating VMRs. Boat, and personal details could be shown in fine detail. The entry could include a *TraderBoat* style picture.

Quoting the boat's registration number could access the entry. So when clocking in "VMR Mackay, this is Speranza TA 529Q." Mackay would tap the rego number into the system and

Hey Presto, there would be Speranza in all her glory with a complete listing of all the relevant details together with a piccie. (Including blood group and shoe size? perhaps not.)

So for boats to log on for an individual trip, all the VMR would need to do is add details of the current voyage including date, destination, POB and time of departure/arrival, etc. That's it. No more 19ft Haines Hunter Center Console, red in color with a 90hp outboard, etc. every log in. That information would already be there in front of the operator. The system would, over time, consist of a complete record of travels. This would enable say a family member to ring any VMR and enquire about a boat's location. The record would show all recent check in's. Moving from one VMR to another would become seamless.

But the primary value is in a situation where you are sinking and you send a Mayday to the VMR. To help them race to the rescue, they would have a complete folio of facts, including a photo. How good is that? Using the rego number as the identifier also overcomes the difficulty of mispronunciation of boat names. Some names can be tricky. Even with straightforward Speranza, we were once called Verandah by a VMR.

Anyway, that's the concept. But what about the practicalities, I hear readers ask.

Well, registration forms could be available at VMR's, marinas, yacht clubs, etc. *The Coastal Passage* may even be persuaded to include a flyer on one of its mammoth editions. Queensland Transport might also be encouraged to enclose a registration form when sending out the annual boat license renewals. Boat owners could send off details in hard copy together with a photo to be scanned in.

There is probably a more scientific solution as well. But I admit to preferring Australia Post and/or carrier pigeons to emails and stuff. Those who have access to a 10 year old grandson (an expert in all the leading edge, gizmo stuff) could probably do it on line. You might complete an electronic proforma and email it off together with a digital photo. You now see where the 10 year old comes in.

Is privacy a worry? I think not. When good old Telstra had Seaphone operating, you often heard callers discussing dad's bowel movements live on air. And currently, you are asked for personal details over the VHF by the VMR so every can overhear. By doing it by mail or email, details remain in house between the individual and the VMR.

So there you have it. A seamless, comprehensive record across all VMR's which is easy to access and update. Now readers may react to all of this by saying, "Tell him he's dreamin. Suggest he consumes another bottle of red." If that were to be the upshot, then I will happily oblige.

This is the culprit behind some of the funniest pieces ever to mutilate the pages of TCP. Thanks again Keith!



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by Alan Lucas

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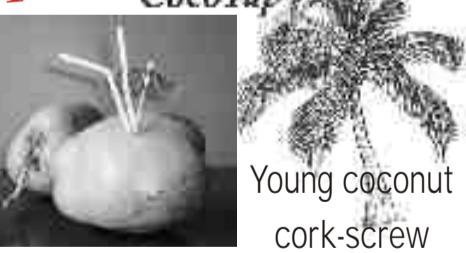
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The Royal Brighton Yacht Club on Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay hosted the third annual Audi Top of the Bay Keelboat Regatta

story and photo by Jennifer McGuigan, RBYC



at left: That's Commander Ken Walters of the HMAS Cerberus and crew onboard the navy yacht, Charlotte. They competed in division three. They come every year.

Hosting Division 1, 2 and 3 boats as well as two cruising divisions and the Dragon State Titles, the competition over the weekend was fast and furious.

The Corby 49 from Sandringham, *Flirt* brought home her second major regatta in three months having won the Boags Sailing South regatta in Hobart in January.

Christopher Dare and his crew put together consistent performances across the five race series to finish two points clear of the Geelong based DK46, *Shogun*. *Shogun* had taken line honours earlier this year in the Kidder Williams Melbourne to Launceston race, competing here with Tony Bull on the helm they won the very lumpy final race placing them second in IRC and wresting the PHD division from *Flirt* with the Royal Brighton Yacht Club based *Rush* in third.

Just two further points behind *Shogun* to take out the third place spot on IRC was Michael Hiatt's Cookson 50, *Living Doll* from the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria.

Division 2 saw some hard fought battles, however the first place position was emphatically filled by the well performed Adams 10 *Executive Decision* skippered by Grant Botica. With four first place positions in IRC division Botica did not need to start in the final race to take away the trophy. Second and third place was split by just one point after Frank

Kruger and his crew showed their exceptional team work to finish with five straight IRC wins. Warren Parker's Lotus 9.2, *Double Malt* is never far out of the placing's and this regatta proved no exception finishing with 8 points overall to knock Greg Raynor in the other Farr 1020, *Island Trader* into third position.

The PHD handicap system caught up with Paul Wise, skipper of the Bavaria 38, *Instant Karma*, struggling with the chop in the last race of the series they posted an eighth place leaving them one point shy of the series win. The experienced and consistent pairing of Rosie Colahan and David James steering their Jeanneau 40 *Ingenue* into the first place spot. As winners of the double handed division of last years Melbourne to Vanuatu race the *Ingenue* pair will be ones to watch in the upcoming Melbourne to Osaka race.

David Atkinson, immediate past commodore of Royal Brighton Yacht Club pulled out a popular third place in his Bavaria 37 *Frequent Flyer II*.

Charlie Stanton again performed brilliantly to win the Dragon division and the Victorian Championship in *Amazing Grace*.

Cruising without extras rewarded Malcolm Eaton's consistency in his Hanse 41 *Cassata* to finish ahead of Will Merritt's Mottle 33, *Andulucia* and Stuart Lyons *Spindrift*.

Hammond steered his Radford 35, *Horizon Sprint* to victory in the final race of the series. Phil Bedlington and Andy Ward coming in third in their Borrensen 12 *Under Capricorn*.

Division 3 was shaping as the battle of the Farr 1020's but from the start Brendan

Industry News.. SPC... Schionning Production Catamarans



by Bob Norson

Schionning Designs has entered the boat production business with the Wilderness series of designs. The boats are going to be built in Batam Indonesia at RPC Technologies LTD, an Australian based company that Schionning reports as having broad experience in composite construction in everything from marine to rail applications and defence. (Does that mean I can get a rocket launcher on the bow?) Project coordinator is Mike Smith, who has some boat building experience including the 76 foot trimaran "B&Q Castorama" built for Ellen McArthur. That should insure that the boat will handle your more modest requirements!

Schionning has some cute ways of describing the type of finish, much more romantic than mine;

Canvas: Delivered as a blank canvas ready for you to add your personal touches and tastes. A boat finished by you, for you. Finish your structural shell the way you want!!

Ignite: Turn the key and motor away! Ready for an extended motor voyage to any destination. Finish the boat in your schedule, budget and tastes.

Breeze: Destination? Sail away at wind speed with complete deck gear, rig and sails. Apply your finishing touches as you require..... Don't like suede, how about leather?"

Hey, I would just call them shell, motoraway or sailaway.

SPC will also be providing pre-moulded components to incorporate into the popular Wilderness kits. Stuff like side decks, saloon tops, forebeams, daggerboards, dagger cases and rudders will be supplied making building your own boat quicker.

From Schionning Marine; "**Committed to delivering a quality alternative for those looking for the next level of performance, style, comfort and affordability. Let SPC take the headache out of your build. With the first boat starting production in March 2007 SPC is ready to help you on your way to freedom... For an introduction into the future of multihull design and supply including full pricing and specifications on the 'Canvas', 'Ignite' and 'Breeze' options contact our experienced sailing team at Schionning Marine.**" info@schionningdesigns.com.au

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Great news guys! TCP wishes Schionning Production Catamarans all the best!

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Sailing to Sweden...



for the afternoon?

Story & Photos by Vicki J., SY "Shomi"

'I took a boat load for a sail to Sweden this afternoon.' Steffen informed me on the long distance call from Denmark to OZ. 'So you are anchored and going back to Copenhagen tomorrow?' I asked naively. 'No. I'm already back in time for dinner.' 'Did you leave yesterday?' 'No. We left after I finished work today.' 'And you are back in time for dinner?'

For this Queenslander the idea of taking a 2 hour sail and arriving in another country was like seeing a cow flying past my window. My mind boggled. Steffen has numerous relatives in Denmark who own boats and a cousin who has given him the use of his 8 meter Waarship designed aluminium sailing yacht anytime he chooses. Each year he returns to visit his father now in his eighties and has a working holiday while there. Last year I went along as well.

There are some basic differences that arise when sailing in Denmark. The first I noticed was almost all the boats are 8-9 meters. Six months of the year the boats spend on land. The harbours become giant ice hockey fields, without warning. So come October, November at the latest, boats are lifted onto cradles. Hence the Marinas have as much area devoted to land as they do to water.

Another notable difference is sailors rarely anchor anywhere along the coast of 'The Sound' the stretch of water between Denmark and Sweden. Quaint harbours and historic fishing villages dot the coastline at frequent intervals, for a price. One exception last year was the Royal yacht anchored in the Sound. Unlike many other royalty there is a very relaxed atmosphere around the Danish royals. We sailed right up to the Yacht without apparent concern from anyone. The crew in naval uniform simply smiled and waved to us as we checked them out. Also different is the architecture. Space age technology is juxtaposed with ancient castles.

My sail to Sweden in the afternoon came last year. Steffen and I rode borrowed bicycles through user friendly Copenhagen (pronounced Co-in-hown in Danish). Mine assembled by his millionaire uncle who is a recycling fanatic was pieced together from various bits and pieces to form a very interesting specimen I nicknamed '*The Terminator*', primarily due to its terrifying habit of developing the shakes at the most inappropriate moments. It had me performing alternatively as a circus clown and a drunken derro. Add to this that the Danes ride on the wrong side of the road and the bicycle paths are used widely by commuters to and from work who do NOT appreciate a bumbling, obviously inebriated Australian sightseer weaving in their path.

I learned quite a few new Danish swear words whilst trying to master *The Terminator*. Which leads me to another difference.

continued on page 19...

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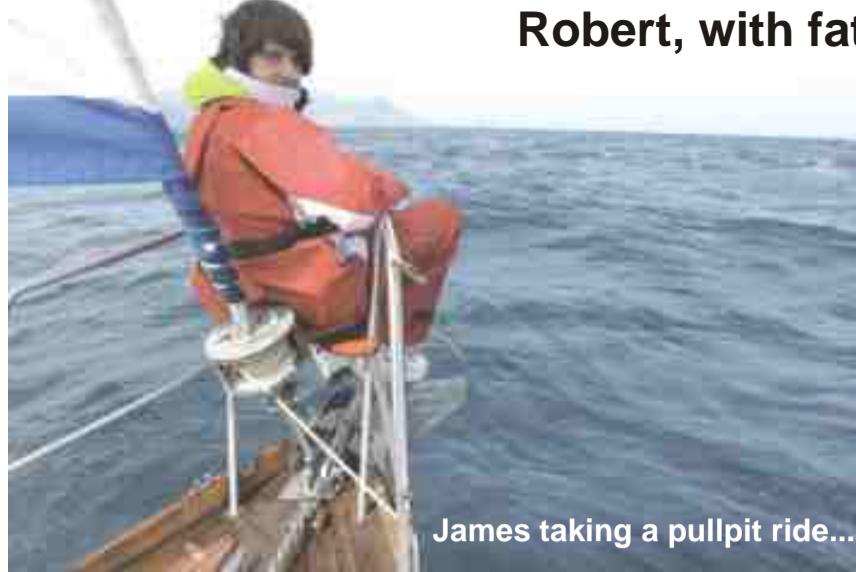
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Bass Strait CRUISE the true story...

Robert, with father, sons and friend, share in a trip of discovery



James taking a pulpit ride...

Story & Photos by
Robert Latimer on SY "Tee Pee"

Summer In Bass Strait

At the best of times, the weather in Bass Strait is changeable. At the worst of times, well, words hardly seem adequate. Just think Sydney-Hobart yacht race and thoughts of endurance and survival immediately spring to mind. (Although this probably has more to do with modern boat design than anything Mother Nature might dish up). To make things worse, of all the months in the year, December and January take the prize for maximum changeable-ness; a cruel twist of fate, since it's also the time when I take my annual holidays.

Starting Out

So it was that on the 27th December, after what seemed like years of preparation, anticipation and expense, we finally guided Tee Pee out of the safe confines of the Yaringa marina in Westernport to begin her 17 day Bass Strait adventure. On board were my two sons, Matt (19), James (15), father Bill (77) and friend Evan (30).

Five people for a day-sail is one thing. But five people, plus gear, food and provisions for an extended cruise, is quite another. In our case, being mostly family, we were all well aware of each other's bad habits in advance and embraced the challenge of remaining friends.

Course Of Adventure

Our initial plan was to make our way under the Phillip Island bridge, (something we can do at low tide with 1.5m to spare) then southeast to Refuge Cove on Wilson's Promontory, followed by a northerly diversion to Port Welshpool, where we planned to celebrate New Years eve. After this it was to be a case of island-hopping south, through the Kent & Furneaux Groups, returning via George Town on the Tamar River. (near Launceston)

As the sun set on our first night afloat, we sat at anchor behind Cape Woolamai, (on Phillip Island home of the ever-popular, nightly penguin parade) excitedly discussing

the plans and possibilities before us, while packing away the last of the gear. Will we get away tonight as planned? Is the gale warning and the forecast of a south-westerly bluster going to change anything? Should I have eaten that extra helping of spaghetti? How will I handle a night watch on the helm? In the end, the uncertainty surrounding the weather caused us to defer our departure, as we opted instead to sit at anchor and wait for the change to come through, rather than facing it out at sea. We didn't have long to wait. By 5:00am the next morning the wind shifted through NW to SW and began blowing at 25-35kts. Beyond our sheltered anchorage, seas were beginning to rise 3-5m, with conditions predicted to abate later in the day.

In our case, being mostly family, we were all well aware of each other's bad habits in advance and embraced the challenge of remaining friends.

For us, a window of opportunity had opened and it was time to jump through. But not before inserting a double reef in the main and trimming the headsail back to something just bigger than a storm jib. The seas were not going to be much fun, but with wind of an acceptable speed and from our stern quarter, two out of three seemed like good odds. We weighed anchor at 5:30am as the first of the morning light began appearing in the east. James and I took first watch and along with the rising sun came the rising southwest swell, as the shelter of the headland fell astern. Our baptism of spray, rain and breaking seas had just begun. The response from those in their bunks below deck was to shut the hatch and call out, "give us a yell if you need any help!!"

A Long First Watch

As the day wore on, the seas got bigger and the wind got stronger and not only was food

off the day's agenda, so it seemed were willing hands to take a change of watch. (Now, what would captain Bligh have done?) So James and I plugged on, relishing the excitement, as our speed regularly tipped 8, 9 and 10kts as we surged forward in the face of each advancing wave. "*Is it rough enough for you yet?*", I asked James as he sheltered behind the corner of the dodger. "*It is rough isn't it*", he replied, and this from a boy who reckons it's all a bit tame unless the wind gauge is topping 30kts.

It was early afternoon that the sun made a solid appearance and the much-promised, "abating of conditions" could be detected. Below deck, my father, Bill, was content to read, write up the log, or eat the occasional biscuit, (he is simply seasick-proof) while Evan lay motionless in his bunk between occasional grabs for the ever-popular bucket. The older boy, Matt, meanwhile, stirred in his starboard quarter berth before emerging on deck for a look around and some fresh air.

Destination Refuge Cove

My enthusiastic exclamations about Joshua Slocum and Sir Francis Chichester having both sailed in these parts, kind of lacked currency with my audience, however, this did not include my father I must say, who has a prodigious appetite and memory for dates, times and most things historical. The Wilson's Promontory lighthouse was rounded at 18:00 hours and our goal of a daylight arrival at Refuge Cove achieved an hour later. We'd travelled 175 km in around 13 ½ hours, an average of more than 7kts. After a queasy start, Evan slowly began showing signs of life and to his credit,



battled through to gain his sea legs, as we all soaked in the glassy stillness of this so appropriately named destination. For two days we swam, relaxed, walked and explored Refuge Cove before heading north to Port Welshpool on Friday 30th December. The weather got sunnier and warmer, but more importantly, the wind kept blowing our way, as we made the six hour hop up the coast with slack sheets and a generous bow wake. There was even time for a (solar) shower on deck as the plastic bag with hose and spray-nozzle was hoisted up the rigging and hair shampoo liberally dished out.

below: Bill is "simply seasick proof"



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The multi-hooked lure, towed astern, netted 4 large fish and so dinner this night was definitely not coming out of a can.

New Years Eve

Our decision to tie up at the Port Welshpool wharf for New Years eve was partly to appease the boys' desire to catch up with a few of their mates and partly to allow crew members to exit should the first leg of the journey turn out to be "beyond their expectations". As it turned out, everyone aboard was eager to press on for a further two weeks, and the New Years eve party took the form of a (paying) jazz gig I'd organised with the Port Welshpool Hotel two weeks earlier. The logistics of the gig involved my wife, Linda, driving down from Melbourne with the band gear along with an entourage of young musicians and assorted other family members and supporters. The evening's line-up saw Matt and James playing Celtic violin music and then jazz with four of their mates, to the delight of all the gathered (and increasingly intoxicated) revellers. It was a memorable night, made even more so by the fact that I didn't have to prepare the meal onboard using our two burner metho stove!

The New Year saw us back on board Tee Pee around 1:30am with a steady easterly breeze acting to keep us off the wharf. Somehow the peace and tranquillity all seemed too good to be true.

It was around 4:00am that the change came though. First, as a searing hot northerly wind at 25kts; a wind that left no doubt as to its inland desert source. Then, as a cold westerly wind of similar strength, accompanied by horizontal rain. The pounding against the wharf started almost immediately as the ripples of the small, pier-enclosed harbour built into fully-fledged waves in a matter of minutes.

"All hands on deck!!". I love saying that. It's even better when the crew actually respond. This time they did, with the immediate task being to hold the starboard side of our beloved Tee Pee away from the wharf while I arranged a long line from the portside to further down the pier, in an effort to keep us off. Our impromptu, nocturnal exercise complete, it was then back to bed, snug inside while the rain and cold beat down.

Departure Delayed

The gale warning and rain persisted all day, so it was agreed that our departure would be delayed until the following morning, Monday 2nd January. The morning arrived soon enough and after heading away from the wharf and clearing the channel on the outgoing tide we laid a course south to Deal Island, part of the beautifully remote Kent Group.

Good progress was made under double reefed main and a 50% jib, with the 11 hour jaunt seeing us at anchor in West Cove by 6:00pm. In keeping with the

coastal forecast, the wind strengthened from the west at around 30kts, although gusts from the nearby hills and the seaspray it raised, exceeded this at times, causing us to repeatedly circle on our anchor. Normally a source of anxiety, as the anchor sets and re-sets itself, I was comforted in the knowledge that my over-sized anchor, (capable of holding an 11 ton boat) and generous supply of chain, would hold me fast.

Psssst ... Like A Loan Of An Anchor?

Not so tranquil were the husband and wife team aboard a 40 foot yacht, with whom we shared this remote and wind-swept bay. As light began to fade and numerous attempts at anchor-setting proved unsuccessful, it became clear that their, (grossly under-sized) anchor was not going to do its job. As anyone who has pitched a tent in public, or made a difficult and obscure purchase in a hardware store without asking for assistance will know, setting an anchor is a very private matter.

continued next page.....



Fish for dinner!



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Bass Strait CRUISE CONTINUED

Whilst everyone within a 1000 yard radius, (and no doubt many on shore as well), will have an opinion, very few are brazened enough to proffer advice. "Have you tried ...?", "Maybe a bit over there ...?" "You might be a bit close ..." or "Are you letting out enough rope (sorry, warp) ...". No, few will raise their head, let alone their voice, but it's amazing what can be gleaned at close quarters out of the corner of ones eye!! Finally, to quote Popeye The Sailor Man, "I could stand it no more". Knowing the skipper from our marina back at Westernport and feeling for his wife who was bravely making her first foray beyond home waters, I called out whether he'd like a lend of my reserve anchor. In accepting my offer, I sensed his relief as we set about transferring my, (neatly stowed away and brand new) 25kg admiralty anchor, along with chain and rope to his foredeck. While tied up astern, I resisted the temptation to ask why it was he had little more than a picnic anchor between him, his beautiful 9 ton yacht and the rocky headland not more than 200 metres astern.

The Magic of the Kent Group
The next 2 days we remained within the Kent Group, transferring first to Garden Cove in an effort to seek greater shelter from the increasing westerly gale and then back to East Cove on Deal Island, in order to explore ashore once the weather system had finally blown itself out. A walk to the historic lighthouse atop a steep, granite hill of 1000 feet, saw us battling to re-gain our land-legs, as the whitewashed buildings of an earlier age were inspected and the wildlife of mostly (tame) wallabies and Cape Barren geese were photographed. Built in 1848 by some early English migrants, (affectionately known as convicts) the lighthouse claims to be one of the highest in the world. So high is the structure in fact, that its effectiveness

was sometimes reduced on account of being above the clouds. Today, it's inoperative as a lighthouse and maintained as a museum by enthusiastic volunteers who vie for the privilege of acting as island caretakers for three-month stints. During our brief visit, there was a husband and wife team in charge, with our friendly chat revealing that the usual day job of "husband Tony" was as one of the chiefs in the Victoria Police air-wing. Certainly remote Kent Group would have been a change of pace.

Onward And Southward

Turning our back on The Kent Group, the afternoon of Wednesday 4th January saw us complete the six hour hop further south, where we made landfall for the night at Palana on the northern tip of Flinders island; the main island making up the 50 plus islands of the Furneaux Group. An early departure the next morning enabled us to work our way down the west cost of the 64km long island to our anchorage for the night, Badger Island. We never did find out why the island was so named; given that there are no Badgers in Australia. Possibly it was the result of some 19th century, homesick naval captain with a love and yearning for the English countryside.

The port town of Lady Barron, at the southern end of Flinders Island, was reached on the afternoon of Friday 6th of January. A goal achieved after carefully following the published sailing instructions, in order to avoid the numerous sandbanks and submerged rocks that lie within the boundaries of Franklin Sound; the stretch of water that separates Flinders from Cape Barren Island.

Whilst we avoided shallow water and hard objects, one thing we did not avoid was the ferocious tide, which passes close to the southern edge of another imaginatively

named piece of ground, Great Dog Island. Thinking I was clever to be arriving on the incoming tide I soon discovered that the flood tide runs east to west in these parts, NOT west to east. The result of this miscalculation was that for 90% of the journey up Franklin Sound the tide ran against us, reaching a maximum speed of over 5 knots near the entrance to the Tasman Sea and the Vansittart Shoals. It was times like this that I gave thanks for my new Yanmar 30hp engine, which at a touch over 2800 rpm could still keep us moving at 1.5kts.

A Car For The Day

From a chance discussion a few weeks earlier at a pre-Christmas function the name of a local resident was obtained; the classic "friend of a friend". As chance would have it, she was home when I called and kindly offered us a car for the day so that we might "explore the island"; an offer we gladly accepted.

Apart from enjoying a different perspective of the place, we also discovered that the island ranks as probably the "road-kill" capital of Australia with a ball of dead fur, (mostly wallabies) on the side, or middle of the road, roughly every 300-500 metres. (No references to rugby and dead Wallabies please).

Surrounded by fishing boats and a couple of yachts returning from the Sydney-Hobart race, we enjoyed our two nights, nestled against the wharf, in the sleepy outpost of Lady Barron.

Tamar River Here We Come

Having learnt our lesson about the tides and with the imminent arrival of easterly winds, it was time to plan our homeward course; a strategy that had us away from the wharf the next morning at 0400 with a generous following wind and tide destination, George Town.

In his book, Sailing Alone Around The World, Joshua Slocum speaks of his enjoyable stay at George Town and surrounds, including the Tamar River and Launceston.

For us, the stay was no less pleasant, particularly after the 17 hour sail from Lady Barron. A trip included our first experience with sea fog, two hours of being totally becalmed, followed by seven hours of reefed-down, pole-out excitement before a brisk easterly gale.

Tranquil George Town

The red clouds from the setting sun were fading in the west as we made ourselves secure against the George Town public pontoon. A modern facility, built to serve the comings and goings of small craft while at the same time address the problems caused by a 3 metre tidal fluctuation.

Whilst the sign said "Maximum 3 Hour Stay" the ever-helpful, elderly radio operator of the local sea rescue service, (whom we had got to know quite well over the preceding week from regular VHF weather forecasts and two-way communication) assured us in his distinctive (Welsh) accent, "Oh, don't you worry about that. I keep telling the harbour master that visiting boats need time to recuperate and it's unsafe to move them on after just 3 hours".

Needless to say, we took him at his word and after three days we were ready to

embark on the last homeward leg; a 28 hour, 300km, north westerly hop across what is affectionately known as "The Paddock".

Homeward Bound

True to form, the wind remained changeable, with the brisk southerly of the morning, giving way to an easterly and then north easterly by afternoon. This was followed up with a northwesterly on-the-nose in the early hours of the morning, which, after dying away veered westerly, then south westerly at reasonable strength as we made the final Westernport approach. Again, thanks go to the "iron headsail" and some reserve diesel, for enabling us to keep the quayside appointment with family and friends who had kindly driven down to welcome us home.

An Amazing Experience

In reflecting on the safe completion of our adventure, we have much for which to be thankful. The weather for a start was not as bad as it sometimes is, but more importantly, we learned a great deal about each other, our capabilities and ourselves; particularly beyond the comfort of our familiar suburban surroundings. For those interested in discovering more about this wonderful region of Bass Strait, a simple Web search using a few of the key words in this article, will reveal a mountain of fascinating information. As for me, I'm already planning the next cruise which is likely to focus on the eastern entrance to Bass Strait, including King Island and northwest Tasmania.

Good Sailing!

Bob's note; A DVD was produced of this voyage that can be purchased for \$25 with all proceeds going to support three overseas aid projects. I will put this article on the TCP web site where I have room for more photos and will provide links for previewing the video and ordering if you like. Look at "New Stuff" or "Destinations" pages.

Robert Latimer at the helm of "Tee Pee"



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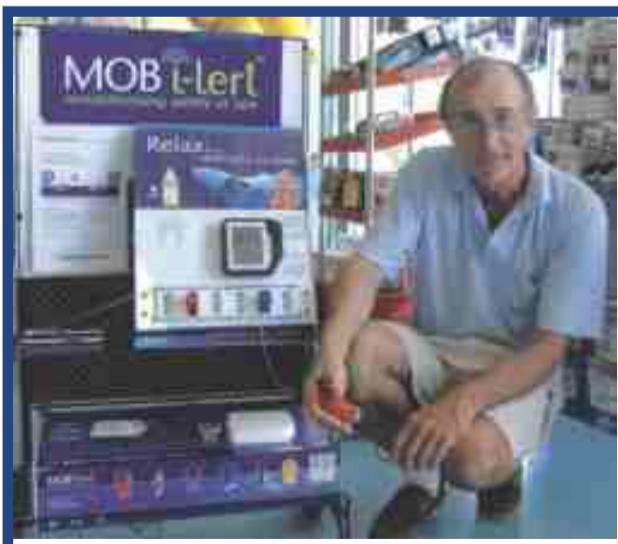
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These pages have been very popular so I would like more boats there to see. Contributors and advertisers are free. See the main boats for sale page for details. Web ads are free with regular display ads.

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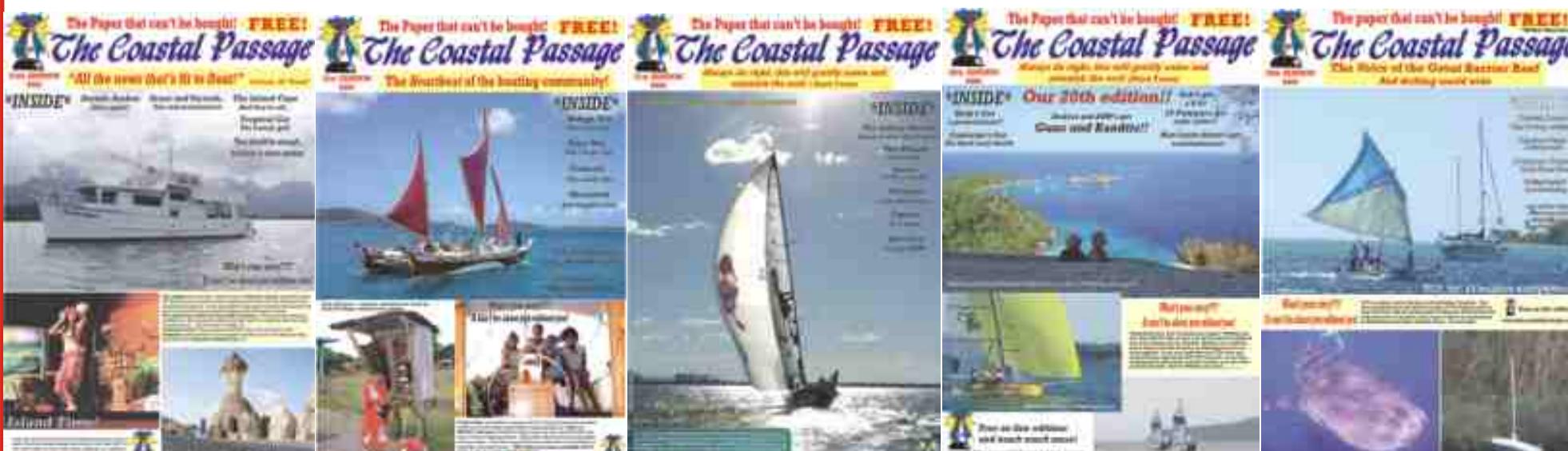
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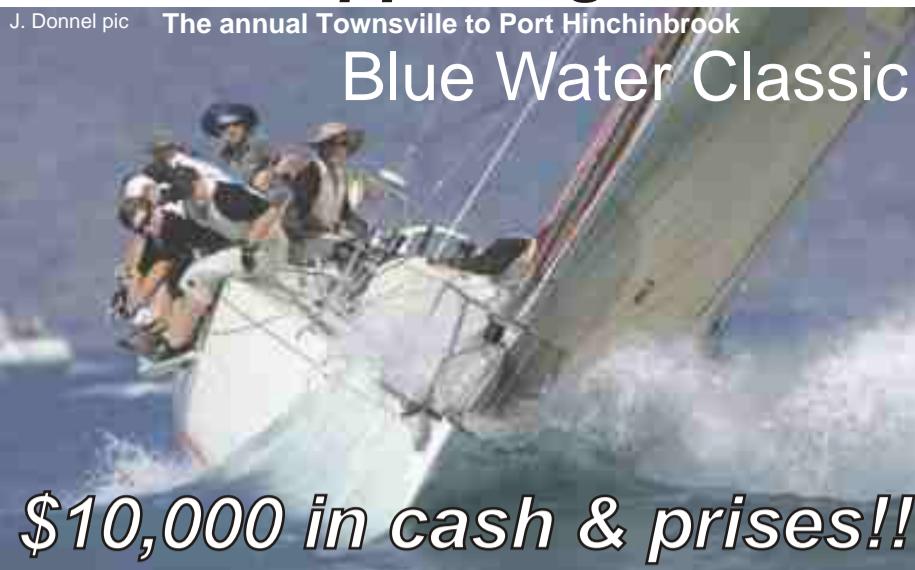


What's Happening?? Events!

J. Donnel pic

The annual Townsville to Port Hinchinbrook

Blue Water Classic



\$10,000 in cash & prizes!!

A race for mono's, multi's and cruisers and the cash goes to the competitors!? That's TCP's kind of action! TCP is proud to be a sponsor of this event and watch next edition for a report.

Yacht races generally don't offer much in the way of cash rewards. Even in the major leagues, the most the winner ends up with is the boat's name on a trophy - and the glory. However this year's running of the annual Townsville to Port Hinchinbrook Blue Water Classic has changed all that, with a total of **\$10,000 in cash** spread between the winners of the Racing, Cruising and Regatta classes over the Easter weekend, including a **\$3000 lucky draw!**

Townsville Cruising Yacht Club Commodore Martin Cesar said that previous years had seen some sharp competition from up and down the coast, several of which had ended with a podium finish. "With the a heap of new features for the Blue Water Classic, and the rich prize pot, this time they truly gave us 'a run for the money'". And of course there is still a trophy to be claimed.

The race started on Good Friday (April 6 this year), with boats entered in either the Racing or Cruising classes heading north to the finish line at Port Hinchinbrook outside Cardwell. While most of the race north took place offshore in open water, 2007 has seen an added event with the new Dungeness to Port Hinchinbrook Race, which is designed to suit yachts that are not rated to compete outside smooth water.

This year the action was broadcast live on **SEA-FM**. The presentation function on Sunday night is for awarding of prizes and trophies, and includes the raucous fun of the Fore Deck Union hauling various skippers into 'court' to be tried and convicted for crimes as serious as dropping a yacht's only corkscrew overboard. And who is the guilty party?? Read next issue of The Coastal Passage to find out!



Fifth annual Caloundra Coast Guard Classic Boat Regatta in August

By Coast Guard Skipper, David McCrudden, photos by Mike the radio guy

The first weekend in August 2006 saw boats built to a traditional design make their way to the beautiful waters of Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland for the 4th annual Classic Boat Regatta. Superbly crafted old boats, clever new reconstructions, oars, sails, putt puts, outboards, diesels, electric propulsion, lots of wood and a bit of fibreglass made up around 40 boats in the fleet. And, of course, a big "thank you" to all of our sponsors who make this weekend possible, especially Stockland Developments whose staff from nearby residential communities are so helpful.

Other boats on the water included surf boats, dragon boats, outrigger canoes, sailing dinghies, kayaks and a host of small craft. One of the aims of the Regatta is to help promote boating safety, so it seemed appropriate to ask various agencies to show their stuff - 3 boats from the Volunteer Coast Guard plus, an SES flood boat, a Surf Lifesaving jet boat and Inshore Rescue Boat, Water Police and their flash new RIB, Council Lifeguards on jet skis, Qld Boating and Fishing Patrol, Marine Parks Authority and Australian Customs formed an on water display with the Energex Rescue helicopter appearing overhead.

The weekend began with our usual "meet and greet" for the out of town entrants on Friday afternoon at Coast Guard Headquarters. Arrangements were made for secure trailer boat parking, moorings, dinner and a few friendly drinks between Coast Guard crews and Regatta entrants.

Saturday morning saw a host of people at Apex Park, Golden Beach with the Classic boats and many others at the ramps. Over 25 groups put displays into the park, local community groups, various boating and fishing groups and lots of entertainment.

The shoreline was crowded with a lot of friendships formed or renewed with the boats on display. It was great to see some people back for their 4th Regatta in 4 years.

continued next page...

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Next Regatta is August 4th & 5th 2007 at Golden Beach, Caloundra.



Boat building is very serious stuff!

Saturday lunchtime saw the Grand Parade form up and cruise past the parklands to the enjoyment of a large crowd of over 1,000 spectators, with lots of entertainment, food and drinks.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the comic Melco Hardware boat building competition on Saturday afternoon. Each team was supplied with timber, plywood, cable ties and epoxy resin to construct a boat in 2 hours, with a boat "race" on the water Sunday morning. Hand and battery powered tools were permitted during construction. Some of the boats certainly needed the strength of the Boat Craft Pacific epoxy to hold them together as the construction methods were very rough and ready.

Caloundra Coast Guard's all female "Girl Power" team still seem to be the crowd favourites each year, although their construction technique seemed pretty rough, they did complete the course on the water.

Our neighbours from Mooloolaba Coast Guard built a superb looking but very small canoe (seems that "someone" told them only half the materials were available).

The Wooden Boat Club of Qld entered two teams who both built identical canoes with flat transoms. At the last minute these were bolted together to form one enormously long double ended canoe. My view was that it had to split in half on the water, but it raced around the course in half the time of its nearest rival!

The Caloundra Cultural Centre put on a delightful dinner for Regatta entrants and Coast Guard members on the Saturday night and Vulcan Fireworks put on a terrific display at the Regatta grounds. Sunday continued with lots of activities for boaters and spectators alike. The Wooden Boat Club of Qld and Qld Maritime Museum provided a series of trophies in a variety of categories, including best sail, best putt putt, best restoration, people's choice and many others.

Thanks to our sponsors, Stockland Developments and Glenda Millsour Regatta Co-ordinator.

Spectators are always welcome, with plenty of entertainment, food, drinks, etc, as well as some beautiful boats to view. If you have a classic style boat, bring it along.

For information and entry forms, contact:

Coast Guard Caloundra,
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Caloundra Qld 4551

Tel: (07) 5491 3533
Email:
admin@caloundra.org.au
Web: www.caloundra.org.au



Sailing to Sweden... for the afternoon?

continued from page 12

The Danes I've noticed are prone to back to front speaking. When first I overheard a Danish phone conversation it was Steffen speaking to his cousin. He began with the customary 'Hi' but as the conversation wound up I was amused to hear 'Hi Hi' as he abruptly hung up. 'No worries mate' translates in Danish 'There's no cows on the ice.'

So here I am wobbling my way through Copenhagen. What comes into view as we near the marina is Christiania. It looks for all intent and purposes as if Nimbin had been crossed with Brigadoon and plopped into the middle of one of the most sophisticated cities in the world. Homeless students and country immigrants were experiencing a housing shortage in the 1970's. When the army vacated its old premises due to heating and maintenance expenses, the urban hippies moved in. All efforts to remove them since have been unsuccessful. The 4 hectare marina Lynetten Haven is just across the road from part of the old Rosenborg castle moat that is Christiania's heart. Due to the evenness of mast heights it looks like a tree nursery in the water. We rig the sail and set off. Past a power plant that burns non recyclable items under intense heat to produce electricity. Baffles stop any strange smells or smoke from escaping. Around the corner comes into view giant space age windmills along the coastline and even larger ones in a row, in the water. 45% of Danish electricity comes from wind power. That might give you a clue as to the general sailing conditions in this area of the world. In the near distance two little islands appear. Both manmade as forts in the paranoid Viking 6th century. They are now tourist attractions and one is leased to Sweden.

Sailing west of these leads to Skagerak Sea. We pass huge ferries carrying cars and people to and from Sweden, looking like multi layered blocks of flats, steaming past Hamlets Castle. Cronberg Castle has stood for centuries surrounded by salt water. All vessels from the Baltic and Skagerak Sea sailing through The Sound have had to pay taxes. This has helped Denmark grow to be one of the foremost shipping companies in the world and a strong nation for only 6 million residence.

If you hang a left or in nautical terms tack to port after Cronberg, Roskilde, one of the original Viking strongholds is situated down the Fiord and houses a working museum where Viking boats are still built with traditional materials and tools.

One of the things to remember when sailing anywhere around Denmark is to bring many layers of clothing. The whole day is generally spent adding and subtracting clothing as the sun plays hide and seek with the clouds. By the end of the day one sympathizes with models and do not consider it a glamorous pastime in the least.

Last but not least beer is served not from anything that keeps it in the least bit cool but directly from the cupboard. The same temperature as the Schnapps chaser. Great on cold days but has a rather woozy effect on hot days. *The Terminator* was not the only reason for my lousy riding on my return from sailing to Sweden for the afternoon. 'Skol' (cheers from the land that will one day soon have an Australian Queen).

Vivki J. and Steffen having a stroll on the wharves.



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Tips for cruising New South Wales & Queensland waters



The familiar solo sailor with typical flags a flyin!

By Keith Sutherland, SY "Carisbrooke"
Photo by: Rob Galbraith

I have been giving lectures to travellers as they pass through Coff's Harbour on both areas to go, charts to use, books to use and radio communications, all free obviously.

In NSW the coastal patrols and coastguard use VHF channel 16 going to 73 for talking (72 Trail Bay). You may have noticed that this gives a range of about 15 miles except around Sydney where there is a land line from VMR to a high hill giving a range of 40 miles on direct calls to VMR. Call your buddy boat and you will only get 15 miles.

In Queensland there is much more use of repeater stations north of Brisbane. As you come up the coast you will hear seaway tower VMR 414 at Southport and Brisbane Harbour on VHF 16 and VHF 67 as far south as Yamba and up behind Fraser Island. This is again a land line between the VMR and mountain transmitter.

Your VHF radio has two modes; most channels you use transmit and receive on the same frequency, giving a range of

about 15 miles except Sydney, Brisbane, Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville, and Cairns Harbour controls that are fitted with land lines. Remember this if you have a distress call to make at night when the VMR have closed down, not routine calls, distress only.

The other mode your VHF radio has is on channel 20, 21, 22 and 80,81,82. Here your signal is transmitted on one frequency, received at a repeater station on the top of a hill and re-transmitted automatically on a different frequency. You don't have to do anything. The repeaters are located all up the Queensland coast, each on a different one of the six channels.

Every first time cruiser (me included(Bobs note: same here!)), finds the repeaters so good and clear that you start talking to your new buddies you have only met to cruise together, only to find you can see your new buddies but the radio does not work. All that has happened is you have gone beyond the 40 mile range of the repeater hill. You would do better to establish a net with your new buddies on a simplex channel such as VHF 77 keeping the repeater stations for your VMR contacts. Remember that chatting on a repeater station goes 40 miles up and down the coast; this annoys others. (**Bob's note; The above is sooo true! The article at right, explains this in more detail and gives the list of channels**)

When you get to Queensland visit the local VMR or Coastguard and get a copy of the pamphlet indicating the repeater channels used by each VMR. (**Bob's note; or see below!**)

VMR Thirsty Sound, covering Shoalwater Bay and the Percy Islands, got fed up with listening to the Whitsunday traffic and have built a land line on VHF 79 to their own hill, the only exception.

All the VMR will give forecasts, also the Bureau of Meteorology gives forecasts direct where you can ask questions. Often you will hear the official forecast followed by his personal interpretation. A pamphlet of frequencies is available from VMR

PS: Manly is manned by Brisbane Coastguard at the weekend, but by Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club VMR during the week. They have one radio on VHF 73, the other radio serving VHF 16, police channel, customs channel, harbour control channel, too busy. If you need Manly use VHF 73.

G'day Bob ,

Geoff Martin here, Yacht NEWSONG now living at Shute Harbour. I have searched around to find an article you did on VHF radio, listing the repeater channels and other details etc. would it be too much trouble to let me know in what issue that article appeared in so I can look it up. Thanks for a great TCPI read every copy I get hold of with great interest.

**Thanks and all the best,
Geoff Martin.**

Greetings Geoff and thanks for the kind words! The info you seek, now published below, is one of those secrets to successful coastal cruising that seems strangely hard to find so I will reprint on occasion and also have on the web site in "technical articles". Another bit of useful trivia... On the VMR radio chart below, if you call Mackay, there are actually several stations that may reply, depending on time and location, including the famous VMR East Mackay of Geoff Henry OAM. This came about because of available volunteers and to increase area coverage. Geoff tells me that now some other areas are using this approach. If you want to contact Geoff directly, he answers to call sign Aarangi. (Maori for Sky Piercer).

DUMB AND DUMBER

Or....

SIMPLEX/DUPLEX...VHF EXPLAINED

by Bob Norson

It was several years ago when I stumbled over the problem. I was testing a radio and couldn't work out why I wasn't getting all channels. The real shocker in retrospect was how many boaters were as dumb as me. Even the Australian distributor of the radio I was testing had no idea and instructed me to return the unit as defective! So for all you dummy's out there....

Here is what is going on.... Most of the frequencies on your VHF are "duplex". That means they receive and transmit on different frequencies even though they are on the same channel. This means that even if you are standing next to another radio, they can't hear your direct transmission if you are on a duplex channel, because you are transmitting on frequency "A" while they are receiving on frequency "B". This is where repeaters come in. Repeating stations do more than just boost a signal and send it on. They receive your frequency "A" and re-transmit your signal on frequency "B". Got that??...

So, here's how it works: You are chatting with another boat at your island anchorage on channel 81 (duplex channel). Your transmit frequency cannot be heard directly by the other boat. The signal goes to a repeating station back on the mainland, which re-sends the message on a different frequency that your mate receives.

. Your personal conversation has travelled up to 80 miles back and forth, and any radio in range of the repeating station can hear it. If you want to talk directly to your mate, use a simplex channel. A handy tip to know if you are engaged in smuggling, gun running, or just don't want to clog up the repeater channels.

Oh yeah...Have you wondered what that control on your radio means? The one that says "USA" or "INT" (International)? What happened there is that the USA uses far less duplex channels. So...if you and your mate at the island anchorage both had your radios adjusted to the USA option, you could talk to each other on more channels directly. (This is just to illustrate a point, I am not recommending you use the usa channels)

To put it more simply, SIMPLEX frequencies are boat to boat.

DUPLEX frequencies are boat to repeater to boat, even if the boats are next to each other.

FREQUENCY CHANNEL CHART					
INTERNATIONAL (us!)		USA			
SIMPLEX	DUPLEX	SIMPLEX	DUPLEX	SIMPLEX	DUPLEX
6	1	61		1	17
8	2	62		2	18
9	3	63		3	19
10	4	64		4	20
11	5	65		5	21
12	7	66		6	22
13	18	78		7	23
14	19	79		8	60
15	20	80		9	61
16	21	81		10	62
17	22	82		11	63
67	23	83		12	64
68	24	84		13	65
69	25	85		14	66
71	26	86		15	67
72	27	87		16	68
73	28	88			
74	60				
77					

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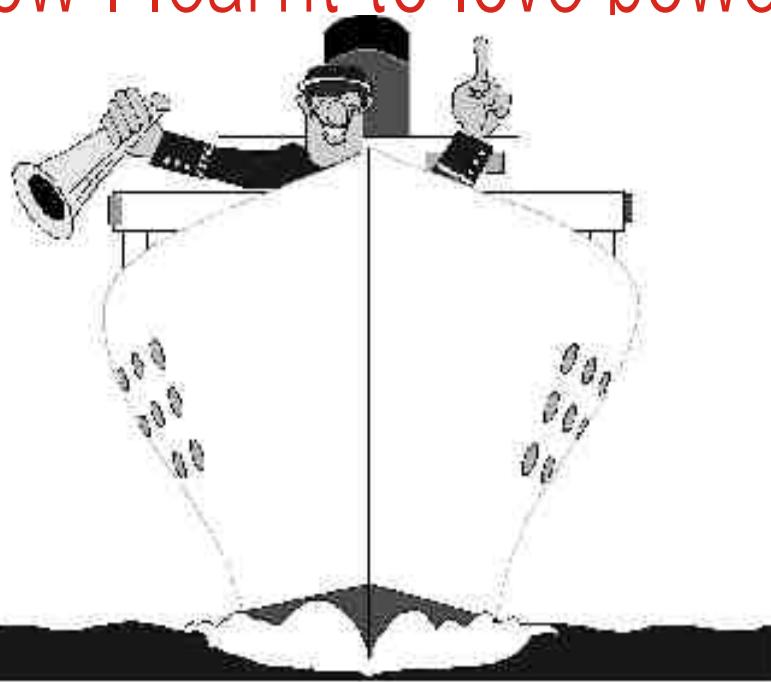
Gold Coast: +61 7 5591 1066 Redland Bay: +61 7 3829 0450

Brisbane: +61 7 3895 0333 Sunshine Coast: +61 7 5437 7396

Yeppoon: +61 7 4933 7990

Whitsundays: +61 7 4967 7222 Townsville: +61 7 4760 7812 Cairns: +61 7 4035 1733

How I learnt to love power boats and hate going aground...



By Chris Ayres (Probationary Skipper),
SY "Lady Lonsdale"

I used to hate power boats. How dare they bore past you leaving a wake 10 foot high just to make you spill your scotch, beer or wine depending on the time of day. Ruining peaceful afternoons and bringing out primitive thoughts now made illegal to think by Australia's anti-terrorist laws. Why can't they go slower, respect the peace, quiet and tranquillity of a beautiful anchorage instead of provoking anchor rage, I used to think?

But all that has changed. I am a Reformed Yachtie. I now love power boats. And their wash. It happened like this. A fight with a spinnaker pole last year has left me with a (temporarily) damaged drinking arm. Consequently long trips up North or down South and certainly out East are on hold until such time as my right flipper is back in action. This has had the significant advantage of getting me to enjoy, explore and discover the delights of Moreton Bay.

Now those who have not yet discovered these delights are innocent of Moreton Bay's most intriguing surprises, Sandbanks. Where they shouldn't be. But bloody well ARE when the echo-sounder shows 0.8 metres, alarms scream like demented politicians and slowly ever so slowly the bow lifts, the stern settles and motion ceases. Like running into a mattress but without the bounce. Whatever way you describe it, you are aground. Bloody hard and fast aground. Ego destroyed. Reputation as a Competent Sea Person Ruined. Worse still, you are stuck in the mud!

And so it was this morning. After several days anchored peacefully at Slipping Sands, North Stradbroke Island, where we had relished the pleasures of yet another bleak strong wind warning, luxuriated in the rain - everyone else in the whole state of Qld wanted - and experienced the delights of cold cold weather, we foolishly decided to move to

see if the rain was as wet and the wind as cold a little further down the Broadwater. Silly idea. As we motored serenely past the Port Hand marker with the little sign saying 'Shoals' I had one of those 'senior moments', daydreams or just plain lapses of lucidity which seem to be increasing as the years progress. Next moment, motion ceased.

Now it shouldn't happen. We have not one but THREE echo sounders on Lady L. Being an optimist, I always believe the one reading the deepest water. But today there was no room for optimism. One had given up and looked forlornly blank.. One gone berserk showing 30 metres (oh yeah!) and the ancient Seafarer showing 0.8 (when less than 1 metre is unhappiness, and anything over one metre, bliss) and screaming abuse at me. It wasn't alone.

Totally my fault. Not going forward or back but staying firmly put. Wind and a current conspired to make certain my puny efforts with the motor were to no avail. My partner Rhonda briefly, accurately and succinctly described my seamanship skills in terms best not published in a polite journal. So I lowered the dinghy and eventually managed to get to the bow, battling what I am SURE were 40 knot currents and stronger winds. Once there my loyal partner and bosun lowered our enormous bower anchor into the dinghy, nearly sinking the dinghy and ending my self-imposed misery. A hundred miles of 3/8" chain followed, further challenging the buoyancy of the dinghy. Eventually with the effort born of desperation I must add I managed to get the anchor and then the chain (correct order cynics please note) overside and firmly embedded in deeper water. Hopefully, to be later retrieved. Then I returned to Lady L who by this time was showing more of her hem-line than a well-bred lady should show.

Innocently I tried the anchor winch which (as so often the beast does at moments of greatest need!) said "you must be kidding" and promptly sprang its circuit breaker. So I asked bosun to put the kettle on. Being a thoughtful idiot, I had chosen a rising tide to run aground. So we waited. While the kettle boiled.

But what was that coming around the corner? Could it be our salvation in the form of a rapidly approaching cruiser? Half hidden by her enormous bow wave? Yes! We waited. Breathlessly counting down the moments until the stinky roared past. I gave them my nicest smile and genuinely waved kindly at them with all fingers instead of the usually extended middle finger. They kept going, considerably not cutting their engines the slightest little bit. We waited. Time seemed to stand still as the cruiser flashed past, its bow wave approaching, approaching and approaching.

I had the motor running. My finger hovered over the anchor remote switch, the bosun muttering words of encouragement (such as "bloody wash will push us further on the mud!"); and "wont work" and "why did you stick us on the mud in the first place?" - to which I could not think of an adequate and honest reply). The tidal wave from the cruiser came inexorably towards us. I felt the bow lift. "Not now" a voice in my mind said "wait". I engaged gear. I pressed the anchor winch button and promptly as expected the circuit breaker clacked. With one arm on the wheel, another on the throttle and a third from somewhere pushing the circuit breaker I used a fourth arm to flick the anchor switch. Slowly the bow lifted and came round towards deeper water. More waves lifted us. Around we came. Faster. The echo sounder stopped screaming at me and began showing numbers. Further we came. The last of the wash lifted us and we were afloat. Once again the circuit breaker went on holiday but by now bliss and happiness had returned to *Lady L* along with 2 metres of water under her keel.

So thank you unknown stink boat operator.
We love you.

Lessons learned?

1. Try and avoid senior moments; if unable to:
2. Always move in Moreton Bay on a rising tide.
3. Never travel on Moreton Bay with a falling tide.
4. Always ensure that a fast moving power cruiser is at hand to provide a tidal wave of sufficient size and duration to enable skipper and crew to right the wrong of the skipper.
5. Love your local speeding hurtling power cruiser. They have their uses.



Chris & first mate, Rhonda

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Auckland International Boat Show, 8 to 11 March.

Story & photos by Jim Gard of Fusion Catamarans

New Zealand must be congratulated on the presence they have created in the Marine Industry, with the highest boat ownership per capita of any country in the world, and no where is it more obvious than the Auckland Boat Show.

The Show was officially opened on Wednesday evening by the Lord mayor of Auckland, and with the city lights as a backdrop to the excellent entertainment, it was a sight to remember.

Local Manufacturers such as Maxwell Marine, Aquapro Dinghies, Hamilton Jets, Majestic Global, Fusion Electronics, Strong Marine Limited, etc had plenty of new products to encourage owners to bend the plastic.

World renowned Boat builders such as Salthouse, Austral, Keith Hill, Genesis and Adventure Bay Motor Yachts, displayed their latest 40 to 160 foot creations, and the queues whilst not as long as Sanctuary Cove, oo'ed and ah'd as they marvelled at the beautiful craftsmanship.

One product that took my eye was a cleat, manufactured by Strong Marine Ltd, it was electrically operated from a switch at the helmstation, and was designed so that in its down position, the rope would simply drop off, and the cleat would be flush with the deck.

New Zealand also has its share of Designers, with Derek Kelsall, Roger Hill, Warwick, Jarrod Hall, Martin Alexander, and Daniel Upperton, each of whom had their latest creations and electronic images which were enough to make the mouth water.

The Auckland Show was a winner with the 400 plus exhibitors, and with the temperature around 25 degrees for the 5 days. What more could you ask for.

Bob's note: Several TCP advertisers were in attendance at this show and from the reports I have received, I hope to have a visit sometime myself.



The disappearing cleat!

interesting....

Fusion Steals the Show!

By Bob Norson

Airlie Beach based company, Fusion Catamarans, reported "amazing" results from the crowds at the Auckland Show.

Jim Gard, of Fusion, said "it was like taking coal to Newcastle", with so many excellent boat building companies in NZ, such as 'Salthouse' in attendance but the Fusion drew strong interest in spite of the plethora of local talent. Besides the great style and unique kit opportunities the reputation of the craft is spreading. The boat sails and looks f***** great!

The Fusion 40 on Show had been custom built for Stuart Bettany a long time sailor and current member of Team New Zealand.

Although the Fusion was a late entry and missed a lot of the early publicity, word spread quickly about this striking craft from 'down under', and the queues just got bigger. Representatives of well known manufacturers such as Fontaine Pajot, Leopard Catamarans and a multitude of Multihull design companies were seen together with staff closely inspecting the display boat. Hhmmmm...

Jim reports there are currently 3 Fusions in New Zealand, two in America, 1 in Vanuatu and 39 sold in Australia, and with the response to the 1st exhibited at a major Boat Show, these numbers are likely to increase rapidly.

At first glance this boat looked "right" and the track record now accrued insures the vessel will have a remarkable run.

Fusion will be at the Sanctuary Cove boat Show this year! But you will need to dress up because they are at the "Superyacht Pavilion". I'll need a visa to get in!

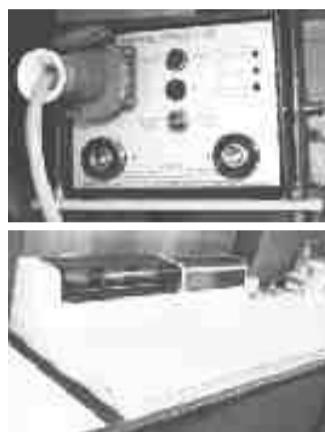


News and Stuff

Energo-Tec Marine Kit

by Bob Norson

This gadget is going to have some old salts shaking their heads in wonder and shame. Living aboard is supposed to infer massive sacrifice and hardship to be 'authentic.' Real sailors drink warm rum and do the laundry by dragging it behind while sailing... right?! On the otherwise very seaworthy Crowther cat, *Charmar*, I was invited to have a look at Chris Whites installation of the system as you can if you happen to be in his port and ring for an appointment,(Usually Cairns). I could hardly believe my eyes! The generating bit was the same size as the engine alternator on the little diesel. The box that controls and converts the output was about 150X125mm mounted nearby. It says you can weld with it! But the really disturbing part was above in the port hull. A clothes washer? That and the dishwasher were bad enough but the killer was the electric clothes dryer... I had to leave before I got ill. Where is the joy in depravation? The pride in hardship? If you want to wreck your reputation you can call Chris at 0418 772 601 but I wouldn't brag about this thing at the anchorages you visit..... Disgusting decadence!



BLUE WATER RALLY 2007-9 TO VISIT MACKAY

The current Blue Water Round the World Cruising Rally is due to complete its 20-month circumnavigation in April 2007. Entries for Blue Water Rally No.7 from 2007-9 already exceed 30, with yachts from 9 nations due to take part. In 2006 Blue Water Rallies Limited and "Yachting Monthly", the UK's premier cruising magazine, entered into partnership for this year's Blue Water Rally.

The organisers have announced that in 2008 the Blue Water Rally will make Mackay the port of entry for the Rally in Australia.

The Blue Water Rally 2007-9 will follow the highly successful formula established over 12 years of running round the world cruising rallies. The Blue Water Rally is aimed at families and friends sailing their own yachts, is cruising-only and follows the well-proven equatorial route through some of the most beautiful cruising areas of the world.

Throughout the event there is the "umbrella" of a professional support team in over 20 ports of call aimed at minimising problems and maximising enjoyment and safety of crews as they "Sail the Dream". Although the Rally provides camaraderie and mutual support, the organisers strongly encourage independent cruising.

"As organisers, we offer a unique level of expertise accumulated over 12 years and over 150 yachts and their crews have circled the world with us. We are sure that our decision to make Mackay Marina our port of entry in 2008 will prove to be highly popular with our participants," says Chris Mounsey, MD of Blue Water Rallies.

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Ballast on the Lee Rail

By Kerry Ashwin, SY "Dikera"

What are you doing? He yelled to me. It was blowing a force 10 and the yacht was bucking all over the place. I was trying to get a loose hatch closed near the bow.

My life-line was suddenly pulled tight as a wave swept me overboard. I thanked my lucky stars I had bought the expensive life-line with the double stitching.

As I began to be dragged along the side of the boat I suddenly started to think about what I would make for tea. A stupid thing I know but I was weighing up the bacon and rice or the pasta and tinned tuna.

The temperature of the water suddenly took my breath away. I started to gulp hoping to take in some air but I began to gulp water instead. Then I was flipped over and was being dragged face side down. Now I knew I was in trouble. My life vest was stopping me from flipping back. I flayed my arms about in the hope of turning over. I vaguely thought about un-clipping myself to stop this battering, but in all the books I had read and all the lectures I had attended I knew that would be tantamount to suicide.

Some where along the way I twisted right side up and was banged against the hull. My arm started to hurt. Not too bad I thought. I can still move it. Time was elongated and I drifted in and out of surreal thoughts.

A voice yelled at me through the rage of the storm. I couldn't make out the words but I knew it was my skipper Barnaby. I remembered the time we practised this very manoeuvre.

It was on a sunny day and a slight south easterly was blowing in Cleveland Bay. I could see Magnetic Island on my port side and Townsville on my starboard side. I was on the helm and Barnaby was the body in the water. The water I recall was warm and stinger season was over. As he jumped overboard I began to about turn and bring the yacht into irons. The sails started to flap about and then I turned the tiller and rounded up-wind to Barnaby. The idea was to drift back to him. I completed the slow slide down to him and threw out the line. He grabbed it and it all became a bit of a lark. We were laughing as I pulled him out like a fish on the line and he landed on top of me. Now I was being towed and also being thrown at the hull every time a wave came my way.

Barnaby had brought the yacht into irons and suddenly the noise stopped. The sea took my line then and started to play with me like a beach ball. My life-line which was supposed to save me now became my killer. Somehow I had got it looped over my head and it was slowly choking me. I wanted to loosen it but I was having trouble moving my arm. I gulped air desperately clawing at my throat. An enormous wave was coming my way. I could see it gathering strength and I felt I had to free myself or I wouldn't make it. I tried to grab the noose around my neck but the nylon was locked in its deadly embrace. I had to decide then, let myself loose or try to hold my breath, maybe my last breath.

A force 10 gale with waves 8 meters high. I began to go over the weather report I had read a few hours ago. Now I was in the thick of it and Barnaby words echoed in my mind. 'We can't outrun this one.'

I watched in fascination as the wave, my nemesis gathered height. I grabbed the life-line, which was strung tight out in front of me and tried to pull a little slack. The exertion used up my last breath and I felt I couldn't take another. I had nothing left. A swell lifted me just high enough to whip the rope and I saw my chance to un-loop my noose. With my good arm I pulled till my lungs burst and I ducked under water and turned. The noose came off and I just lay still. My lungs were red hot now, but I was numb. I lay face down in the water looking into the dark, a calm overtaking me I felt sleepy. I closed my eyes. All at once I was pulled out of the water. The cold of the wind made me gasp. I threw up and then began to breathe. I was so cold now and I just wanted it to be over. Then I heard Barnaby yell out. "Hang on" he shouted. His voice roused me from my stupor and I focussed. I could just see his fluro jacket in the gloom of the spray and rain. I watched him loop my life-line over the winch and he began to wind me in. I wanted to kick to help but I couldn't. I began to think straight, and I decided not to take my eyes off that fluro jacket. If I kept that in my sights I could stay calm.

A wave was building behind the yacht now and Barnaby wasn't looking. We were in a trough, and the wave looked even bigger. I felt I had to warn him, but I couldn't lift my arm and I was holding the life-line in the other. Then I remembered my whistle. I could see it floating in front of me attached to my jacket. I slowly brought my arm up to grab it, wincing in pain. I didn't realise I was shaking so much till I looked at my hand holding the whistle. I lunged at it with my mouth and summoned up a breath to blow. Barnaby heard the whistle and stopped winding to wave. He said something, but I could only watch as the wave broke over the boat. I knew I would be next to get the brunt of mother nature. What did happen surprised me. The yacht lunged forward and was bearing down on me. 14 tonnes moves fast in the water and I had no way of side stepping. All I could do was watch.

Neptune must have been watching over me that day. The yacht came to a skid and I was within about 1 metre of the back rail. That metre was the longest metre in my life but I summoned up my strength and kicked. I grabbed the rail.

I felt terribly cold, and my arm was hurting. With half my body out of the water the wind was chilling me to the bone. Where I summoned up the strength to hold on to the rail I couldn't say, but hold on I did. When Barnaby couldn't see me he began to yell out. I saw him; legs astride for balance yelling out my name. "Netti, Netti" he bellowed. I was too tired to answer.

As I was still being dragged and battered against the boat, I felt I was slipping into a dream. I could see my white knuckled hand gripping, but I wasn't sure if it was me. My mind was flicking through times past. The stainless steel rail we had welded onto the transom years ago was \$56.23 I remembered. We had got Andrew the boiler maker to fabricate it and then we welded it on to the boat. I had the washing on the line that day and hastily brought the clothes inside as Andrew and Barnaby ground the hull for the fixings.

"Netti" Barnaby yelled, and I looked up to see his fluro jacket right above me. "Hold on Netti, I'm coming" he shouted.

I saw he had the gaffer in his hand. I realised his intention was to gaff me onto the deck. I hoped he didn't dig in too far and grab my back bone. With one swoop of his arm he brought the gaff down and it caught my life-vest. Then he started to pull me up. I was loathed to let go of the rail and my grip had become a vice.

Fiction by Kerry Ashwin

"Let go Netti" he said, but I couldn't. My hand was locked onto the rail my muscles contracted into a cramp. I pleaded with my eyes for him to be gentle; he grabbed my life-line, and then my vest pulling me ever closer to safety. Then he cracked the gaffer over my hand to make me let go. It worked and he completed the haul out to the deck.

The boat was bucking and then we slid down the back of a wave into a deep trough. The seconds of calm gave Barnaby enough time to drag me to the cockpit and dump me on the floor. My life-line was still attached to the handrail near the mast, but once in the relative safety of the cockpit Barnaby unhooked me and shoved me down below into the calm of the Rosewood and white laminate interior. It was only then, I remember breathing. I rolled over on the floor to watch Barnaby lashing the tiller and getting ready to jump inside with me.

We had made steel doors for the companionway in case of thieves, but now I was glad they were strong and reliable against the storm. With a thud Barnaby jumped inside and then pulled the doors shut. We were safe. I wanted to say thanks to Barnaby but I couldn't speak. A small croak was all I managed.

Barnaby and I lay on the floor, the boat bucking and dipping with every wave. I looked over and he reached out to grab my hand. I winced with the pain of his squeeze on my fingers, but he didn't let go. I closed my eyes then and felt a warm peace overtake me.

When I woke up, I was in bed. I was shivering and my teeth were chattering. I glanced around the V berth but couldn't see much in the gloom. As my shaking and shivering became heaving spasms I tried to move. The pain I felt was enough to bring me back to the land of the living. I tried to remember all that had happened but it was just a jumble in my mind. How long I was in the water was a mystery, what day it was, was a blur. I couldn't decide if it was day or night now, as I lay convulsing in my bed. Then Barnaby appeared in the doorway, with a hot water bottle and 'Fish hook' our little terrier. Immediately he layered all our available blankets and clothes over me to get me warm and shoved the hot water bottle on my back. I closed my eyes with gratitude and to hide some of my pain as warmth started to keep my body still.

After about 5 minutes I realised the noise outside had stopped. The motion of the boat was slow and rhythmic which I knew to be the usual state of affairs Barnaby stroked my hair and Fish hook walked up to me for a sniff. "Glad to have you back" Barnaby said and planted a kiss on my forehead. "Glad to be back" I croaked and then I realized my lips were swollen and felt thick. I went to touch them with my fingers but couldn't lift my arm.

I must have had the pain etched on my face because Barnaby began to list my injuries. "Don't try to move, as far as I can tell, you have 2 fat lips, a bump on your head the size of an egg, a broken arm, 1 broken finger, sorry my fault, a wicked burn on your neck and possibly several cracked ribs. That's about it. Oh we only lost 1 whisky glass, my fault again and Fish hook won't let me out of her sight for some reason. One more thing, I love you, but don't ever do that again or all you will be good for is, ballast on the lee rail.



The author, Kerry Ashwin, lives on her yacht, Dikera with her family at the Townsville Breakwater Marina. They are getting ready to do some cruising soon!

Romance of the sea

They Launched her on a Sunday

THEY LAUNCHED HER ON A SUNDAY
IN THE AUTUMN MONTH OF MAY
AFTER EIGHT LONG YEARS OF BUILDING
IT WAS TIME TO SAIL AWAY

THE CROWD ALL CLAPPED AND WHISTLED,
AND THEY OPENED THE CHAMPAGNE.
THEY BID THE CREW FAIR SAILING
ON THE YACHT THAT HAD NO NAME.

FOR THE SKIPPER AND HIS WIFE HAD TRIED
FOR EIGHT LONG BUSY YEARS,
TO CHOOSE A NAME THAT JUSTIFIED
THE SWEAT AND TOIL AND TEARS.

THEY LEFT THE BAY OF MORETON,
SAILS ALL HOISTED HIGH,
TO FIND THE CORAL ISLANDS
BENEATH THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY.

TO BRAMPTON, HOPE AND LIZARD,
TO CAPE YORK AND BEYOND,
THEY CRUISED RIGHT UP TILL CHRISTMAS,
THEN TURNED HER HEAD FOR HOME.

WHEN THEY REACHED THE BRISBANE WATERS
THEY WERE HAPPY, FOR THEY KNEW,
THAT THEIR YACHT WOULD FINALLY HAVE A NAME,
SHE WOULD BE CALLED 'THE DREAM COME TRUE'.

© PETER UTBER

Ketch, "Leah"



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Thursday Island to Cooktown.... AGAINST THE WIND!

Story & photos by
Jenny Maruff, SY "Tropical Cat"

I was dreading it. Sailing against the SE Trade Winds was not the way to go but we had to do it if we were to get back to Cairns by early October. Luckily we had an excellent crewman to help us do it. Dave Macbeth had raced and cruised with us over the last twenty five years.

We had enjoyed ourselves in Thursday Island. Dudley had been chatting to Brad Jones, the local newsagent who sells Multihull magazines. Brad took us to see a Schionning he is building and we invited Brad, wife Lil and daughter Jessarna to drinks and dinner on *TROPICAL CAT*. The next day, Lil drove us up to the fort which had been built to fend off a takeover by the Russians in the 1880s. After borrowing Lil's car for a provisioning run we had lunch with Lil and Brad on their verandah overlooking the town and the sea and tropical islands which seemed to be tossed at random all around us. At 3 pm, Lil drove us down to the boat. We up-anchored and left for Horn Is. We were there by 4 pm and having drinks at the pub by 5.

We left Horn Is at 6 am and sailed across the lumpy Torres Strait. The wind was SE 20 to 30 kts. We decided to stop at Adolphus Island at 1 pm. It was a beautiful anchorage. The island curved like a horse shoe and protected us from the wind.

It was still dark when we left Adolphus at 5.30am. The wind was 15 to 20 from the SE and the seas were fairly flat so we kept on sailing. Saw two yachts and four ships. We stopped at Cairncross Island by 3.45 pm. In ten hours we had done 57 miles.

It was pitch black at 5.20 am when we left Cairncross which has a light on it. The change predicted for the afternoon arrived at 10 am with rain and 30 kt winds. Luckily it died off a bit in the afternoon. We

anchored in Shelbourne Bay at 3.30 pm. We were enjoying the sunset when a young trawler bloke came up in his dinghy and gave us a big Golden Trevally.

We thanked him again as we set off next morning for Margaret Bay. It took us two hours to get there. Several fishing boats were hovering around a supply ship. There was a 50 ft motor cat called NOONEBIN, a 40 ft motor cat called XTC and a motor launch called LAURIANA. (see TCP # 14 "Motoring on a Shoe String") In no time at all, we were invited to sundowners by Maurice and Jane on NOONEBIN. I was glad we stopped early as the wind howled all day with gusts of 30 kts. As Dave did some washing, Dudley went over to the EMU BAY to buy fuel.

The wind was still howling so we stayed in Margaret Bay for another day. Ron from LAURIANA said that we should go for a walk to the next beach. His wife Lyn showed us the way. We were stunned by all the rubbish plastic containers, floats, fishing nets, ropes, thongs, timber. Dave found a large trumpet shell and Dud found a lovely Nautilus. We were having sundowners on XTC when a Perry called PERIWINKLE sailed in. The next morning, Ron from LAURIANA called them up on the radio. They were swimming!!! This is a NO NO because of the crocodiles, the specialty of the region.

In 1994, we had met Hugo who had a shack on the Olive River. He would go there every winter. Last year he was reported missing. We decided to revisit the area. It was just south of Margaret Bay. The shack looked derelict and the big crocodile that Hugo used to feed was gone. We tried to make our way through the bush to the beach on the other side but the track was overgrown. We gave up when Dave startled a wild pig. When we went back to the boat it was low tide so Dud and Dave took the dinghy up to the point and got me some oysters. Yum! But there

were no crabs in the pots. They found the beach we were trying to reach was an easy walk around the point.

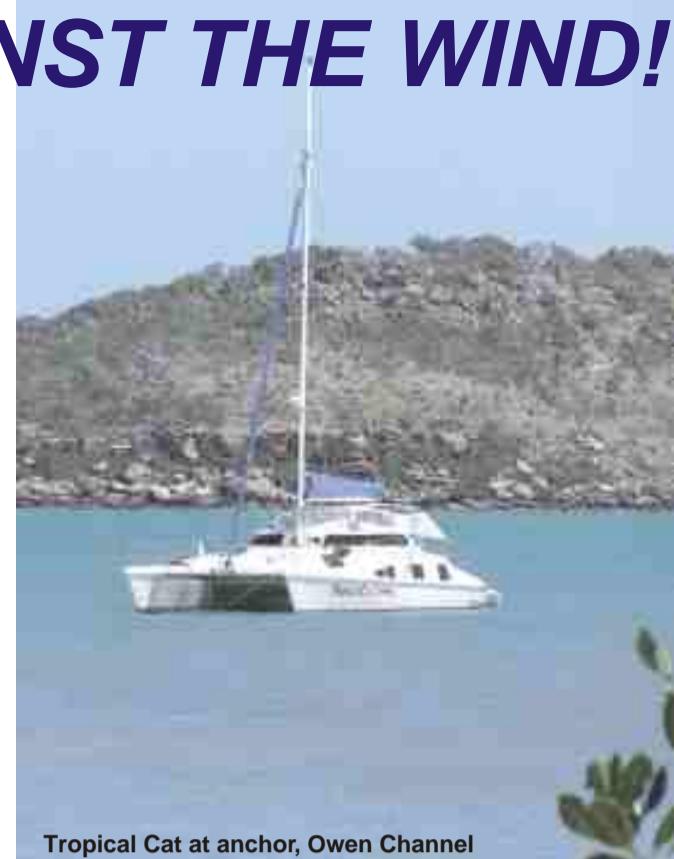
We left the Olive River at 6.45 am the following day. There were light SE winds and we motored most of the day. At 5 pm. we anchored at Orchid Point in Lloyd Bay just south of Lockhart River. We had done 52 miles and the phone worked!

The next day we had 20 to 25 kt SE winds which eased to 20kts. We reached Night Island by noon. It was a lovely flat anchorage. Dudley was surprised to see a chap in a kayak coming towards us. We invited him on board for a chat and lunch. He was Andrew from Hobart who had recently taken up the sport and had decided to do a trip from Hobart to Thursday Is. We thought he was either very brave or dead silly. After lunch, Dud went ashore to look for interesting shells. I declined because I had seen two crocodiles on the island on the way up.

We left Night Island at 6.45 am and had a pleasant sail to Hedge Reef. Dud had spoken to two yachts on the way. One was BRIANNA from the USA. The other was AUSSI OI with Jim, Kerry, Thomas and Molly Alexander. We had seen this beautiful Schionning cat in Mackay in April. (see TCP # 18 for the launch report of this remarkable boat)

Next day, we sailed on to Flinders Island and anchored in the Owen Channel. There were three cats and five monos tucked in for the night. Some of the monos were on a rally from the UK.

All the monos left next morning so we socialized with Lynette and Rudi Stavar on TIATA, an Easy 11.5 and with Darryl, Brian,



Tropical Cat at anchor, Owen Channel

Carole and Joy on TWIN IMPS, a Hitch Hiker from Mackay. The wind blew like mad for the week we were at Flinders preventing us from getting Dave to the airport at Lizard Is. Luckily, TWIN IMPS had a satellite phone which Dave used to contact his boss in Cairns

Flinders Island has rain water in two tanks beside a picnic shelter. There was a taipan lying on the warm concrete floor when I arrived to do the washing. He slid away and the boys filled up the water containers. A supply ship came in to service the trawlers. He was kind enough to sell us milk and bread. One evening two more UK rally boats came in. We invited them over for sunset drinks. They had left Lizard Is at 3.30 am and had had a great sail, despite a gust of 48 kts. They spent a day at Flinders in recovery mode.

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Four of us left on a Sunday morning. The two British boats went north. We followed TIATA south to Bathurst Head. It was a short, sheltered trip. Do not go ashore there at low tide. You will sink up to your knees in thick, gluey mud. The oysters are nice but all the crabs are either female or small males. I do like a big male, don't you?

In the morning, we tried to sail across Bathurst Bay to Cape Melville. We punched into a strong South Easter. One gust registered at 56 kts. We decided to give up and anchor close to shore under a huge hill. TIATA returned to Flinders Is. We sat under our hill in a surprisingly flat anchorage while the wind howled and gusted all that day and all night. I had had enough of cruising.

We left at 6.45 am and had a pleasant trip until the wind came in at 8:00 am. Fortunately, we reached the recommended anchorage at Cape Melville by 9 am. We went ashore to look for the grave of the pearlers killed by cyclone Mahina in 1899. Dud found the grave on his second trip ashore. Dave took a photo of it and the slide and paw marks of a small crocodile..

We sailed off by 7 am and were doing quite nicely until 11.30 am when the wind increased to 30 kts from the SE. We decided to stop at Noble Island at 1.30 pm. According to Lucas, the peak of the island is a volcanic core. Surveyors found a lump of gold there. I was keen to go ashore but Dud and Dave said it was too rough.

We spent a comfortable night at Noble Island, despite the howling of the wind. We left early for Howick Island and were anchored there by 11.30 am. Dud worked on the starter motor. There was water in the starboard bilge because of a loose hose fitting. Dud fixed the starter motor. After lunch, he worked on the hose fitting while Dave steered the boat towards Lizard Is. It was a long day with lots of tacking. We did 60 miles and got to Lizard at 7 pm in the dark. There were heaps of lights in Watson's Bay. We anchored not far from the CORAL PRINCESS and had dinner.

The next morning, we counted ten monos and twelve multihulls, one of which was the Gannon's MORE TIME OFF. Dave went up to the phone at the Marlin Bar and booked a flight out. He was a week late for work. When he came back, he and Dud cleaned the water line. Then Dave ran up the hill to Cook's Lookout and back in less than two hours. I had taken five. Dud and I visited the Gannon's while Dave packed. We walked up to the airport to see Dave off at 4:00pm and when we got back to the

anchorage, we saw TIATA sailing in. That evening, we had drinks with Lynette and Rudi at the Marlin Bar which is the only building in the Resort that yachties can access.

On Sunday, we went for a long walk to the Blue Lagoon. There is a daily ritual of evening drinks on the beach which we felt compelled to observe. We met people who stayed at Lizard for months. They ordered supplies from Cairns or Cooktown that were delivered by ship or sea plane. Water is available at a pump not far from Mrs Watson's cottage. (Bob's note: but the water tastes like shit!) Crew can be flown in or out. There are lovely spots on nearby reefs for diving and snorkeling. You can even swim safely in Watson's Bay (The croc lives on Mermaid's Beach around the other side.) The Research Station reopens for tours in mid October when the building extensions are completed.

We said Goodbye to Lizard at 6.30 am on Monday. The breeze was SE 15 to 20 kts but blew up to 25 later that morning. We were hard on the breeze down to Cape Bedford, then freed up down to Cooktown. We anchored by 1.45 pm, after a surprisingly comfortable sail. **We were back in a town where phones worked, there were shops, clubs, pubs, hot showers and a laundry. Bliss! All that sailing against the wind was worth it.**

(Bob's note: Once again there are more brilliant photos than room allows so I will add this article and the photos to the web site.)



Above: the author at the beginning. Below; the sundowner with Lynette and Rudi Stavar on TIATA, an Easy 11.5 and with Darryl, Brian, Carole and Joy on TWIN IMPs, a Hitch Hiker from Mackay. Left: Hugo's place.



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"Time" Passage People "Kooga"



This is all in fun!!I had a couple of perfectly normal family shots all done and all of a sudden the devil came out! I was having such a good time with this family. Everyone a genuine character. Caught in the act of raising a little hell, the crew of the 42 foot Swanson "**Time**" are... David and Fiona (mum and dad) and Andrew, Gabriel, Mia, Isobel and Josie. Hanging around the Whits for a while before heading south.

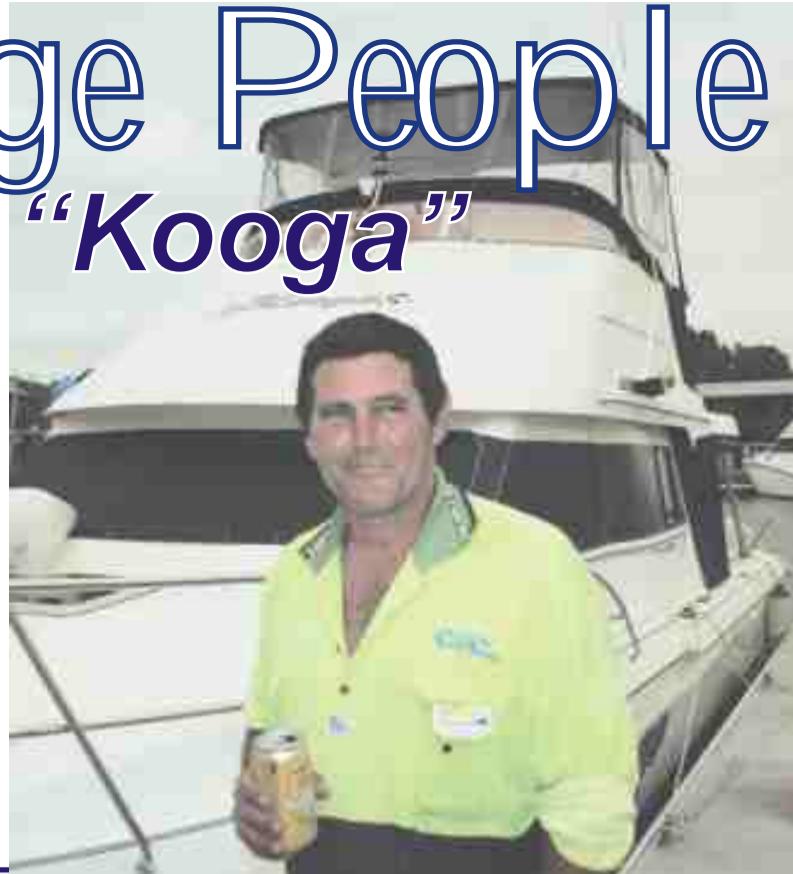


"Sunburn"

So with a Boden 40 called "**Sunburn**" your dinghy has to have the name "**Blister**." Living aboard with kids requires a sense of humour and a penchant for adventure. I caught up with this family right across the jetty from "**Time**" contributing to the chaos. Anyone who has read TCP for a while knows how much I like to see kids on boats, so this is a kind of chaos I enjoy. That's Brendan and Di with Sophie and Finn. Caught in the act of having fun at Mackay Marina.



Common folk caught in uncommon circumstances. Dorothy, Swiss and Jim, US born, have many years of sailing behind them and much adventure and joy to show for it but since entering Australia are now branded as criminals by Australian Customs. Their very uncommon response to this has been to stand and fight. That takes amazing courage in these difficult times. But sometimes that is what it takes to make important changes, a couple of common people of uncommon courage and determination. Make no mistake about it, this fight is one that will directly affect many of you reading this and all of us in a way. Big fights can be a lonely business. If you are in Bundaberg Mid Town, a word of support wouldn't be a bad thing.



Alan's nickname around the place is 'security' as he is the default mayor of Tin Can Bay Marina. So naturally Kay and I caught his attention wandering around and within a minute or less I had a beer in my hand! Hey, that's worth an unlimited range of discussion about anything for me but when he offered to give us a spin about the Straits in his very sharp looking stinker sometime... well, that's worth a picture in the paper!! I'm gonna take you up on that Alan... and soon!



"Carisbrooke"



Rob Galbraith photos

Keith Sutherland of "**Carisbrooke**" has been a regular fixture in the seasonal migration for many years and many of you may have been asking "where is the little boat with all the flags flying"? The answer is Keith has a little health issue that has put paid to his solo sailing days but he is still very active around his home port of Coffs Harbour. He catches a Wednesday sail when crew is available and keeps himself busy by serving the community. One of the valuable things he does is help new cruisers with information such as the article he contributed in this issue. So for anyone who has missed him up north, drop by Coffs and look for the flags, they are still flying!



*A salute to the rescuers
at Mackay Marina*



A barge mounted crane at Mackay Marina fell over onto the cat "**First Kiss**" and brought out a crowd of people to help save the battered craft whose owner was away at the mines. (Pictured is Annette of Boutique Marine one of people at the scene) It's great to see a community pull for one of its own. Thanks to Petrea of "**Talisman**" for a series of stunning photos that I'll put on the web site soon.